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THE MESSAGE OF QUAKERISM TO THE PRESENT DAY

E. M. NOBLE.

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THE MESSAGE OF QUAKERISM TO THE PRESENT DAY.

THE

MESSAGE OF QUAKERISM

TO THE

PRESENT DAY.

BY

EVELYN M. NOBLE.

"Let your lives preach."— *George Fox.*

LONDON:
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1893.

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TO

RICHARD AND CAROLINE J. WESTLAKE,

IN MEMORY OF A

MOST HELPFUL FRIENDSHIP,

AND

IN THANKSGIVING FOR MUCH SPIRITUAL LIGHT.

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INTRODUCTION.

INSPIRATION.

"Let each of us sit still, and keep watch for awhile in the silent house of his spirit. . . As near as is the light to one sleeping in the light, so near is Christ, the Awakener, to every Eternal man, deeply as he may be asleep within his outer man."

JOHN PULSFORD.

IF we consult a dictionary, we shall find two meanings given to explain the word *Inspiration;* "a drawing in of the breath;— an infusing into or stirring up in the mind, something above the natural ability of man, by the influence of the Holy Spirit of God;" these, or some similar explanations, will be given of Inspiration. But if laying aside the dictionary, we consult an inspired soul, he will tell us it is the Breath of God, which is the true life of man. A man, for instance, like John Pulsford, with whom the thought-transference between God and his own spirit has become the most blessed reality of daily life, will explain to us that Inspiration is not something transcending the natural ability of our minds; not something given once to certain Jews, and afterwards withheld; but is the true and ever present atmosphere of healthy spiritual life. In the beautiful words quoted above, "as near as is the light to one sleeping in the light."

"God is as clearly calling Christians," he will say, "as, in a former age he called Jews, out of their old limits into broader places. . . Whoever, therefore, abides by his own, or his forefathers' stereotyped conceptions, may be a worshipper of Christ's tomb, but he has parted company with the living Christ."

Those, therefore, to whom Inspiration means only something pressed between the covers of their Bibles, know little of its reality. To them, Christ's promise that He

would be with the faithful until the end of the world, means nothing: for they practically assert that instead of revealing all truth,—if He is present at all,—He is silent! By such people the light of Christ in the soul, which is the most blessed *fact* of existence, is altogether ignored, and His divine voice "in the silent house of the spirit," teaching, leading, guiding, warning, enlightening, is unheard or regarded as a mere hallucination of the stirred senses!

To them, His perpetual presence, which, to the awakened soul, is as certain and undoubted as any physical fact,—as the love between husband and wife, mother and child, or between two friends whose tuned spirits echo the music of life in unison — as much a physical fact as hunger, or thirst, pain, or pleasure—is mere imagination! . . Such people are indeed asleep in the Light, awaiting, through half their natures, the touch of the Awakener!

Yet we must remember that *all* faculties are gifts of God:—talents committed to our charge to be developed and increased. We dishonour our Father in Heaven just as much in discrediting Reason as in ignoring Spirit. Truth grasped by the intellect is just as binding, as truth realized in the soul. And if we dare to deny truth in any way, whether with regard to natural phenomena, or spiritual experience:—whether in its relation to scientific facts, or to the discoveries of modern enquiry in any department of knowledge, we blaspheme the Holy Spirit just as much as though we denied the divinity of the Lord Jesus.

"Know ye not," says Pulsford again, "that the Living Truth of to-day is the Christ. Say not that 'the Truth' is one of His names; Christ is one of His names, but the truth is what He *was*, and what He *is*, and what He *will be* for ever."

The Holy Spirit cannot lie, but the purest light, seen through a blurred or refracted medium, is broken up, and changed; and we can only reveal according to the depth of our natures;—we can only give out what we

receive, and we can only receive what our spirits are pure enough to assimilate.

If this is true now, it was just as true when the Bible was written: the treasure is indeed there, the priceless treasure of revealed truth, but it is given in earthen vessels, and we must guard against confusing the wine of God with the human vessel containing it.

Once recognise this, and a new light flashes from the pages of the Bible, illuminating all old meanings with fresh clearness, and causing new and more beautiful meanings to spring forth, irradiating life and casting bright flashes of light into the opening doors of eternity.

The more we read other books,—the more we learn of the working and seeking and finding of great minds and loving hearts,—the more precious does the Bible become to us; for we recognise that the Scripture writers were inspired from the Source of all wisdom, all knowledge, and greater still,— because embracing and including these —all Love; that crown-name of God, that supreme irresistible force of the creation, without which there can be no justice, nor aspiration, nor any upward climbing for the Race.

We yield to none in veneration for and admiration of the Bible; but it is the *kernel* that we reverence, not the husk; the truth of the Divine Word rather than the text of the letter or the name of the writer. It matters little whether John or Paul wrote the books bearing their names — what portions are attributable to Moses, or Isaiah—or whether the truths written were handed down traditionally, or inscribed at the time of occurrence.

Probably those pens of God, the prophets, and poets, and seers, and apostles, scarcely understood the far-reaching universal nature of some of the messages they delivered; as seers and poets write for the future now, and each reader translates according to the depth and clearness of his or her nature, finding God's meaning beneath the human language. Exact dates and correct authorship,

inasmuch as their discovery represents approximately truth of detail, are valuable and interesting; but with regard to the inspiration of the marvellous Book itself, they matter not one jot! *That* is attested by the Living Witness within, by that Light of Christ in us, which must be to each individual soul the ultimate judge of Truth. He was the source and subject of the written word from Genesis to Revelation. To Him it bears witness—to Him afar off by the prophets, before He had taken flesh;—to His presence in the world, by the apostles, who wrote what they saw, and as much as they comprehended of their revealed God, until the perfect seamless vesture of the Word's coming in a human form lies there recorded. But His Holy Spirit is with us now, as from the beginning, leading those whose ears are open to His pleading into deeper Truth, fuller comprehension, more perfect Inspiration, infusing into man's soul yet clearer conceptions of God through all manifestations.

These ideas of God must come to each one of us as an immediate inspiration, a direct breath, before we can say they are *true:* without this direct breath we may indeed hold them as intellectual opinions, or sentiments, or desires, but never as beliefs on which to establish our lives —never as absolute truths. The one foundation of a real faith is a *personal* revelation of Jesus to the spirit of His disciple. We see this necessity of personal influence in all earthly love and service. We may reason about the perfection of a person, or a cause, all our lives; we may measure their worthiness and guage their values, yet, unless we first *feel* the love for them, before we reason about it, we never reach the heights of self-sacrificing service. Love comes first; the flash of light, the overpowering attraction, the strange drawing near of spirit to spirit, on which all true religion, all worthy service for God and man is founded; reason and logic follow afterwards, to approve or condemn. It is when in some responsive moment Jesus draws near to us, revealing His

inexpressible beauty and divine love, and like a sudden sunrise wakes the hidden buds of tender feeling and gracious thought in our souls, that we become, in that time-flash, our true selves, born into a new life to be His servants and worshippers for ever.

If once our spirit's eyes have looked upon the Lord, no lesser image can seem fair or desirable. In that moment of inspired joy we understand that to each of the many writers of the Bible came this same blessed vision, until, to them, as to us, all olden things grew new, all common things beautiful, and truth stood revealed in its perfect loveliness. And so, as far as the union of the divine Spirit with the human medium was pure and perfect, they were enabled to write the thoughts of God for all ages.

But just as in human learning it requires a knowledge of any particular science to rightly understand its facts, and guage the value of its deductions, so with inspired truth it needs a soul to whom Christ has drawn near, to comprehend the meaning of these divine thoughts in their human translation. The nearer the Holy Spirit has been able to draw to the believer, the clearer will be his comprehension, the more certain his faith.

Each must for himself or herself *see* Christ; once seen the vision can never be forgotten. Received into the innermost sanctuary of the willing spirit, He will mould that spirit, by its reception of Himself, into the greatest beauty and harmony it is capable of reaching. But in these moulded spirits we need not expect any narrow conformity to one special type, only a unity of love and peace. Lives developing from within by the power of the Christ-spirit, will be remarkable for the diversity of their beautiful flowers of thought, and fruit of deeds; their only similarity will be their fragrance and sweetness, and the refreshing power of their presence amongst us.

Thus we see that Inspiration is the reception into a more or less perfectly opened human channel of the Breath and Spirit of God, and we can trace its influence in all

noble and true work, whether of brain or hand. Recognising it not only in the Bible, (its highest manifestation,) but also in the discoveries of science and the beautiful creations of art.

We can watch this Christ-spirit transmuting the material into the spiritual through all possible developments, leavening the soulless mass of Nature with His fiery breath, until the divine hidden germ becomes a mighty presence, and the inspired impulse an irresistible power.

The Christ-spirit draws the grandeur of patience from the apathetic calm of Egypt: the beauty of holiness from the mere physical loveliness of Greece; the power to bear and suffer for another from the perfect strength and courage of Scandinavia; the steadfast choice of renunciance from the instinctive grasping at personal joy and dominion of Rome; and the sacredness and hallowed sweetness of each small daily action from the quaint charm and tender fancy of Japan.

This blessed Christ-spirit, the Spirit of Love and guidance, has been with us from the beginning of the world, raising, purifying, ennobling humanity, until now, countless souls, impelled by its inspiration, are spreading, in ever-widening circles, a knowledge of the dawning glory of the Saviour's kingdom.

Such a book as *Morgenröthe* could never have been written without direct and immediate inspiration—without that constant communion of John Pulsford's spirit with Christ, of which each page tells in words of radiant joy, and the fulness of peace. As we read on, entranced, our spirits seem standing on the outermost verge of our world, in the glory of sunrise, hearing far-off a faint celestial music, as though "the morning stars sang together." And seeing, dim indeed and shadowy, yet ever drawing nearer, the dream-like beauty of the City of God, the angel-heralded kingdom of Christ!

Even to those who have been hitherto unable to accept the historical Christ, as *we* do with the deepest love of our

hearts, and most intense and undoubting faith of our souls, even unto them He continues to come, for never again can *anyone*, whether he call himself Christian or not, think or act uninfluenced by the life and Spirit of Christ.

This life as portrayed in the Gospels may be to them a mere allegory, a beautiful symbol of pure and perfect existence, in the sense that a flower's life typifies a human one. Jesus apparently laid little stress on the recognition of Himself personally. He was the Light in a darkened world to show men the way to fulfil His Father's will; and He seems rather to have encouraged His disciples to walk in this light, and open all the channels of their natures to its influence, than to reason about it, or try to define the mode of its action. Not by brave words but true deeds; not by acknowledging Me as Lord, but by doing My Father's will as I do, He taught, will you become consciously His children. Natural kinship is little until raised into that spiritual kinship wherein the whole being *lives* the prayer, "Thy will be done!"

When this state has been reached, then indeed the new creature has been born, the true kinship has been found, and the union with God, which opens all the purified channels of life for the reception of His Breath (Inspiration) has been attained! Then, and not until then, do we understand the true meaning of the word, as personally applicable to ourselves. Then, and not until then, do we rightly comprehend the Bible, and all other revelation, and recognise that whatever mars or detracts from the perfect Ideal of Love, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, is due to the refracted or impure medium, never to the Inspiring source.

That perfect Ideal of Love—a faint shadow of which haunted the Hebrew prophets and poets—could only be revealed by God Himself, and manifested in Jesus. But since the vision came into our world, the servants of divine beauty and truth:—art, music, literature and science, have been always striving to re-produce, in their various

ways, its lineaments; and each is noble and precious, just so far as it shows forth with power and sweetness the all-pervading Spirit of Christ the Regenerator.

Wagner's music, brimful of Inspiration, and suggesting always the unheard melodies behind it, is great and true, because of its Christ-spirit, its expression of love and self-sacrifice, and tenderness, and pity, and truth, and courage, and heroic life, and death. Parsifal is perhaps the most beautiful presentment of pity and love since the Saviour lived His divine life under the human veil. Elizabeth and Senta are inspired types of tenderness and self-sacrifice. Lohengrin, Siegfried, and many others, all show forth this over-shadowing Christ-spirit in different aspects, and witness to the communion of the musician's spirit with the Father of Spirits.

The Christ-spirit is the Inspiration for all the noblest types in Browning's portrait gallery, as in Wagner's. Pompilia and Caponsacchi, the simple girl, the worldly priest, kindled into heroism by the impulse of a God-given opportunity — the pure presence of Pippa, passing like a flower-laden breeze across corrupt lives, and recalling them to purity and newness of endeavour, as she flits through the poem bearing her name, a breath of music on her innocent lips,

> "God's in His heaven—
> All's right with the world."

Childe Roland pressing on to the dark tower, heedless of all obstacles, careless of the pain awaiting him at the end, careful only to follow the ray of light cast on his darkened path.—Not one of these noble and beautiful creations would have been possible without the Inspiration of the Christ in the soul of the poet; and the more perfectly and entirely the soul is yielded up to receive this Inspiration the better the work, the greater the joy of creation, the truer the message delivered.

Holman Hunt's pictures cause new and sublime thoughts to spring up in the minds of all who see them, because,

through their glorious symbolism and radiancy of pure and tender colour, they show forth the Christ. Who, that has ever looked on his presentment of "The Light of the World," the tender patience and quenchless love in that divine face, in every line of that gracious figure, standing alone at the closed door, amid all the beauty of the moon-litten world, can ever doubt that the Master Himself was present in the soul of the artist, before he could show forth the very Spirit of His life in the glory of colour, with such mighty force and truth, that instinctively the gazer feels in the veritable presence of the Light-Bringer?

No merely human skill, again, could have laden the *Scapegoat* with its world's-weight of pathos:—the innocent amazement, yet steadfast uncomplaining strength in the creature's face, as it stands against the marvellous back-ground of empurpled mountains, amid the utmost desolation of unlovely earth, treeless and flowerless, utterly alone, bearing the sins of others, that by its pain and miserable death they, the guilty ones, may be won back and healed, could never have been portrayed until the man, Holman Hunt, yielded himself up to the divine inspiration, and realized under this type the agony of Jesus, and showed forth with all the might of his art and genius, the bitter bareness of earth to the Saviour, and the glory and radiance of the heights He left behind Him, to bear the sins of a world which, instead of worshipping, crucified Him! No one can look at this picture, understanding it, without "tears from the depths of some divine despair" filling his eyes and heart, until he realizes, as perhaps never before, that the crown of thorns set on the patient brow at last, was but the outward sign of the thorn-strewn life lived for his sake.

All men and women cannot of course show forth their inmost rapture of communion in concrete form, but the fruits of Inspiration are given to *all* who ask, and who open the doors and windows of their natures for the entrance of the Christ.

We often find that the simplest action prompted by love, the mere repression of a bitter word or thought, may lift up the heavy gate of self, may unbar the closed door of sin's dungeon and let the King of Glory come in, bringing with Him the boundless hope of a new-birth, and the cleansing Breath of immediate Inspiration. "As near as is the light to one sleeping in the light, so near is Christ the awakener, ..." this is the witness borne by an awakened soul, and what *he* has experienced, *all* may experience in a greater or lesser degree. But we must remember the apostle's warning: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we *drift away* from them."

That is the great danger,—a "drifting away," not an absolute denial, not an actual fighting against, but an insensible receding, a gradual yielding to the promptings of the material, and consequent hardening to the low breathings of the spiritual, in our natures. If we allow the world, and the things of the world, to fill our hearts and thoughts; if we cease for a moment to be channels of grace, to receive and pass on the Inspiration breathed into our beings, the power will drift away, the receptivity will wane, and the light into which we might have awakened will fade into the sunset of death.

The choice is our own. The desire for guidance, the readiness to receive Inspiration, brings the guide, prepares the medium; while the self-will which strives to guide itself, drifts rudderless to destruction, and the close-barred nature dwindles into the lifeless desert of unbelief and loveless ruin.

We cannot choose both Inspiration *and* human happiness, yet they are not antagonistic. And frequently the earthly joy follows the heavenly rapture; but it must *follow*, never *lead*. It must come as a free gift from the Father of Spirits, never as the fruit of personal grasping. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Oh! let us not hesitate in our choice, but lift up the

gates of our minds, and throw open the doors of our spirits, that the King of Glory may come in (as He is waiting and longing to do) and dwell with us, and give us the bliss of perfect communion with Himself, and breathe into us the perpetual Breath of Inspiration for the atmosphere of our new-born spirit's home!

CHAPTER I.

GEORGE FOX—THE SEEKER.

THE many books lately published on Friends' views and history, the various articles in magazines, papers, etc., and the constant references to Quaker aims, modes of thought and worship, by men and women outside the Society, all seem to indicate a revival of essential Quakerism; and we think it will be interesting briefly to examine the Ideal which the Society of Friends has always, with more or less clearness, set before its members, and to see whether Quakerism bears any message for the 20th century, as it undoubtedly bore one for the 17th, and if so, in what this message consists.

It was a strange distracted world into which George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, entered in the summer of 1624. And as the thoughtful, large-eyed boy grew toward manhood, and his intensely religious nature sought in vain for spiritual nourishment in the churches and amongst the professors around him, only receiving in return for his impassioned questioning such answers as "take tobacco," "get married," etc., it must often have seemed to him in the bitterness of his disappointment that the earth itself,

> "Bound by gold chains about the feet of God,"

had been swept into some poisonous atmospheric current, which made every possible and impossible opinion, every hallucination, however wild and terrible, seem natural and reasonable to the mind of man, until madness had slain sanity in the strongest brains, and fear and fanaticism had strangled pity in the tenderest hearts.

To perceive the truth of this statement we have only to note the meaning of the word "toleration" amongst the various Reformed Churches. With a very few honourable exceptions, notably one of the early Baptist Churches, the

followers of the saintly Schwenkfeld, and the Society of Friends, "toleration" meant, freedom for the speaker's opinion, persecution for all others.

Luther fiercely attacked those who differed from him as "inspired by the devil" Zwingle permitted Anabaptists to be persecuted and drowned without protest, and Calvin delivered men over to fearful punishments for confuting his peculiar opinions. The Presbyterians and Independents when in power, turned out the Episcopalians from their benefices, and forbade the use of the Book of Common Prayer, even in domestic circles, under pain of heavy penalties; while the Episcopalians, at the turn of Fortune's Wheel, ejected 2,000 ministers, made attendance at Parish Churches compulsory under like penalties, and even fined those who could not conscientiously partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper!

The Synod of Divines at Sion College in 1645, spoke of toleration "as a root of gall and bitterness, both in present and future ages." The Lancashire ministers said it was "the taking away of all conscience," and "the appointing a city of refuge in men's consciences for the devil to fly to!" Edwards, the author of Gangrœna, says, "a toleration is the grand design of the devil—*it is against the whole stream and current of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament.*" We marvel how he could explain the two commandments of Jesus, the love to God and the neighbour, and the constant iteration all through the Gospels and Epistles of that key note of Christ's teaching, "*Love* is the fulfilment of the law." He goes on, "the devil for some *thousands of years* has not found out *this* engine, nor made use of it to support his kingdom."

Milton and others tell us that the Assembly of Puritan Divines who had cried down the Bishops, plurality of livings, etc., were only too eager to step into the displaced clergymen's places, and were scandalously greedy in grasping two or more of the best of these livings, besides lectureships, etc.

The Church of England in 1610 contemplated forming a colony in Virginia, and amongst the Laws and Articles proposed for it we find the following: to "speak maliciously" against "the holy and blessed Trinity" or the "Articles of the Christian Faith," the *penalty of death.* For "blasphemy" or "unlawful oaths," first offence, the punishment to be "severe;" for second offence, "a bodkin thrust through the tongue;" for third offence, "death." If anyone "unworthily demeaned himself unto any preacher or minister" he was to be *openly whipt* three times, and to ask "public forgiveness" in church on Sunday. For Sabbath breaking, the second offence to be punished by whipping, while the third was to be punished by death. When the bell tolled on *working days* every man and woman was to go to the church to hear divine service, or lose the day's allowance for first offence, while for the second offence they were to be whipped, and for third sentenced to six months at the galleys. No man or woman arriving at the Colony was to omit going to the minister and giving an account of their faith and religion: if told to go again for further instruction, and omitting to do so, they were to be whipped for first offence, whipped twice for second offence, and for third offence they were to be whipped *every day until professing sorrow in the church,* and repairing to the minister!

Even as late as 1721, we find in the Parliamentary debate on altering the affirmation for Quakers, the Earl of Iley, in reply to Bishop Atterbury, who had said that Quakers were "hardly Christians," remarking that they were "Christians by act of Parliament!"

It is quite evident that toleration, as we understand it, was as entirely unknown in most of the Reformed Churches as in the Unreformed ones; and that they nearly all taught, with greater or less distinctness, the doctrine that it was lawful for the State in the best interests of its subjects to suppress heresy, and keep men in the right path for heaven, with scant attention to the needs of individual

consciences. Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury under William III, was an honourable exception: a truly tolerant man in an age of intolerance, and amongst a persecuting class. "Toleration," he said, "is a right due to all men, their thoughts are not in their own power. They must think of things as they appear to them; their consciences are God's, He only knows them, and He only can change them." But the great Bishop stood almost alone in his enlightened views, and was exposed to much misunderstanding and reproach on account of them.

The Reformation had apparently set men's spirits free from the bondage of Rome only to subject them to the myriad bondages of the new sects; for these unhappy spirits, cramped, tortured, and deformed by their long imprisonment, sprang up wildly, and plunged into a perfect saturnalia of strange, grotesque, and in many cases, grossly material creeds, revolting and hideous enough almost to justify the Catholic Church's stern suppression of heresy; until the leading Reformers themselves, aghast at the flood of blasphemy which threatened to overwhelm their new doctrines, began in their turn to persecute each other, and all who dared to differ from their definitions of truth.

Many of the sects which came to light after Luther's great upheaval had been long in existence, but silently and secretly practising their rites, and diffusing their doctrines, with as little noise as possible: living in retired spots, lonely hill villages, and mountainous tracts, in different parts of Europe, for the most part unmolested, because unnoticed. To these were now added the leading sects of the Reformation: Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Lutherans, Calvinists, the followers of Zwingle, Huss, and innumerable others, while almost every day saw some new sect spring up, some fresh growth of doctrine, or some strange error crystallize into a creed.

In studying this period we feel indeed as though passing through a lunatic asylum, wherein each madman and woman

strives to silence all the others, or force them to conform to his or her personal hallucination ; and wherein, amid a deafening din of clamourous voices, persecutors and persecuted are swiftly changing places, but all retain the same intolerant nature and the same incapacity to grasp the essence of Christianity, though professing to live by its teaching, and calling themselves by its name !

Edwards, in his " Gangrœna," enumerates over two hundred heresies, and erroneous opinions. Many people declared themselves to be God, and Christ, the Lamb's wife, etc. One man said he had healed a leper, and restored defective sight. Another prophesied the return of the king before Cromwell, and said he was a prophet. Some declared it dangerous to read Scripture before a mixed congregation. Some said, to sing David's Psalms was blasphemy, and telling lies ; that all set times, whether for public or private prayer, were unlawful and superstitious, and that it is lawful to take up arms to restore the kingdom of Christ. That human learning is flesh, and Universities are of the devil. Edwards preached against mechanic preachers, and one stamped with his foot and said, " this rascally rogue deserves to be pulled out of the pulpit ! " and half a dozen men answered, " let us go and pull him out !! "

Ludovick Muggleton and John Reeve proclaimed themselves the two witnesses of the Spirit, of Revelations XI, said they were the forerunners of Christ's last coming, and were commissioned to foretell eternal life or death to individuals. They countenanced no forms, but met in a festive manner, and said, when God, Who was in the form of a man from the beginning, came to earth, Moses and Elias represented Him bodily in Heaven. They said also, that until the Resurrection the souls of men were as mortal as their bodies. The Ranters sang, whistled and danced : appeared in sackcloth and ashes ; took tobacco and drank ale at their meetings ; some of them said sin was no sin to them, since they were manifestations of the Godhead.

Some thought it sinful to wear a garment at all; and all, and each, calumniated and persecuted every other sect than their own.

Even such saintly men as Baxter and Bunyan seemed to have no glimmer of the sacred right of individual conscience. The former said, he had some hope of the ultimate salvation of Baptists, but doomed all Quakers without reserve to utter damnation; while the latter, who afterwards owed his release from jail to George Whitehead, had been one of their most vehement denunciators.

The clergy are described by contemporary witnesses as pluralists, non-residents, busy-bodies, newsmongers, frequenters of ale-houses, often intemperate, and of weak and small understanding; very illiterate, and unable frequently to answer the simplest questions, from ignorance, even of their Bibles. In Sedgwick's words, "honest industry is quite discouraged, being almost useless; most men that have estates are betrayed by one side or another, plundered and sequestered. Trading, (the life and subsistence of thousands,) decaying, eaten up with taxes; your poor quite ready to famish, or to rise to pull relief from rich men's hands by violence. Squeezed by taxes, wracked with war: the anvil indeed of misery, upon which all the strokes of vengence fall." Baxter says, "the pulpit instead of being made a means of preaching the gospel to ignorant miserable people, they rather disputed with them of formalities and niceties, when the question presented to be determined is whether they are to live in heaven or hell." While the description given of the seven divines who were sent to Oxford to reconcile the University to Presbyterianism, and who held councils to answer questions and remove doubts, and received from the students the name of the "Scruple Shop," sounds like nothing but a scene from one of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas!

It is a dark and terrible picture that rises before us, as it rose before George Fox's earnest eyes, and yet even here amid the crowd of idol-worshippers, each striving to

set his own particular fetish on the altar of the Eternal, each shouting with brazen tongue his own particular shibboleth, there are gleams of the pure Light of Heaven; for scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land, like sheep that have no shepherd, but are hunted by wolves from their deserted fold, dwelt many thousands of calm-browed, earnest-faced, quiet men and women, their yearning eyes turned heavenward, a great silence on their lips, a great longing, yet an unspeakable peace in their hearts. Gathered from all sects, yet of no sect themselves; worshipping at no material shrine, yet drawn from all shrines. Earnest seekers, such as have existed in every age, not finding reality in the crystallized traditions of the churches, not satisfied to say one thing and do another, not content to see Christ, as an earnest disciple has said with brutal frankness, a "homeless tramp," and themselves in well-fed, well-clad luxury, listening to His Words, had gathered themselves apart, sometimes by twos and threes, sometimes more, and sometimes, as we see in all the autobiographies of the saints and martyrs, quite alone, save for the overshadowing Presence they dimly felt urging, restraining, guiding them. Called out of the churches, as the children of God have always been called: called out of the world to lonely places, to wild woods, to hollow trees; urged by the loneliness of their aching souls to any spot, where, alone with the Father of Spirits, they could face the problems of life and death, and finding, if peradventure it might be found, the truth, walk ever afterwards in a clear path, in the light of a consecrated life.

Persecuted by all the loud-voiced throngs around them, they steadfastly persevered, seeking, fasting and hungry-souled, the Bread of Heaven, the Wine of God, and waited for the Light. They sought, it was said, an apostle or angel, able in the spirit to give some visible demonstration of his mission; and at last these Seekers, exiles of all the sects, grew to be regarded as almost a sect themselves;

but still, they formulated no creed, founded no church, but watched and waited in patient silence for the Light and Guide they felt wanting in the much-professing, little-performing churches around them..

It is inexpressibly refreshing, in reading the history of the 17th century, to find, amongst the jangling, warring, persecuting churches, and parties, crying "Lord! Lord!" while by their unloving, unlovely lives, they crucify Jesus afresh, these simple Christlike Christians, springing up everywhere, like unblown daisies amid the grass, waiting for the Sunrise to open their spirit-eyes, and unfold the petals of a new faith, peaceable and pure. It is like being carried to the summit of a snow mountain, above the crowds, the clamours, and the cares of a great city, wherein we have been wandering; there only we find a free atmosphere which we can breathe after the dense vapours which choked us below!

George Fox, as he unfolds himself in his autobiography, seems to have been a typical Seeker....His first great awakening, came to him at a Fair, when asked to drink a jug of beer with his cousin and a friend, both "professors," as in the quaint language of the day, the outwardly religious were called. After quenching their thirst, his companions called for more, to drink healths with, growing apparently somewhat excited and boisterous; and we can well imagine the direct, sorrowful look of the large-eyed dreamy youth, seeing so much more than merely drinking when not thirsty, in this health-pledging custom, and recognizing that here was the first step toward a life of indulgence and dissipation, which must necessarily involve denial of the Lord, and the true life of His followers. . . Taking some money from his pocket he laid it on the table and left the house. . .

We suppose most people who know anything of re-generation, of that new birth which Jesus said was a necessity before seeing God, will call to mind some similar incident in their own lives, when, out of an apparently trivial

circumstance was born the new creature, the sudden sight of truth. We suppose most of us can say with the blind man in the Gospels, "Whereas I was blind, now I see!" We cannot afterwards tell exactly what happened, we cannot explain in hard words the change of view; we only know it *has* changed, we have had our moment of choice given to us, and have seen on one side the Lord, and recognized in a time-flash the Eternal Light in His blessed face. And in that vivid moment we have also seen the adversary in his true hideousness, and our spirits have shrunk back appalled! It is not often that souls are touched and awakened like Paul's by the materially visible Light and audible voice from heaven, or confirmed in their faith like John the Baptist by the materially visible dove, yet to every soul comes the vision in one form or another, when there passes before the eyes of their spirit the Holy City, and the God Who is the Light thereof, and also the darkness which is the shadow of unrepentant sin! . . .

"I passed the night," says George Fox, "walking up and down, I could not sleep, but prayed and cried to the Lord in deep distress." And many following days and nights did he pass in the same state, sitting alone in hollow trees, open fields, woods and other lonely places, the Bible in his hands, while he waited for the light of the Holy Spirit on its pages, without which he could not comprehend its blessed teaching.

To many, perhaps to most of us, the awakening touch of the Master, which makes faith the living breath of our souls, not the mere hereditary garment of our minds, comes to us in our homes, setting all old things in a new light indeed, and calling into being innumerable possibilities of fresh service in trodden paths, casting a fairer halo of affection round beloved brows, and of holiness round daily duties; but to some few the call comes, "Take up your crosses and follow Me!" And to this sorrowful youth the summons came in this wise, and without hesita-

tion he left his home and his own people, and wandered through the land, seeking everywhere in all the churches for someone "who could speak to his condition."

Priest after priest, minister after minister, he consulted in vain—his own people advised marriage—but the boy, with the premonition of divine love in his heart, with a dim sense that earthly love is only desirable, when in the union of two a third is included, even the God who dwelt between the cherubim, turned away sadly, murmuring, he "must get the wisdom," (the feminine counterpart of the masculine love.) His beautiful letters to Margaret Fell, after she became his wife, show the strength, beauty and purity of the love he was capable of feeling when he found the ideal woman, who could be not only the companion of his life, and the comrade he needed for his work, but the complement and fulfilment of his own nature. Then one priest advised him to drink beer....do we not hear an echo of the old cry "let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die?" But still the boy, for he was barely twenty, went by them sighing, pausing not in his weary pilgrimage from shrine to shrine of human idolatry, growing each day sadder and more weary, yet with the unslakeable thirst in his soul, which could never be satisfied without the living water Christ alone gives. And satisfied he was at last, for like a sudden sunrise, or as Dante, who well knew this weary pilgrimage of spirit, says:

> E senza cura aver d'alcun reposo
> Salimmo su, ei primo, ed io secondo,—
> Tanto ch'io vidi delle cose belle,
> Che porta il ciel per un pertugio rondo;
> E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.

The voice of God came to him: he had found at last "Someone who could speak to his condition," even the Lord Jesus, Who reveals Himself sooner or later to every faithful Seeker. . . But the Seeker must be absolutely true, must not only be ready to seek Him through "prayer and fasting," *i.e.* renunciance of personal joy for the good

of others, but by shutting *all* worldly doors, and opening *all* spiritual windows in his nature. By stopping his ears to the world's warring voices, and opening them to the angelic whispers; by leaving all earthly delights, to spend time, money, and any other gift or grace he possesses, in helping the poor, the sick, and the sorrowful.

George Fox was not only *ready* to do this but had done it at the first summons, when, instead of laughing at the health-pledging in the tavern, he had sorrowfully listened to the silent voice in his soul, and left his lively companions, to seek the Light which had now dawned upon his spirit. Showing him, (as it must always show the world's saints and martyrs) the stony path to Calvary, which each must tread, bearing the heavy cross of the world's sin, and with bruised and bleeding feet, yet with a great joy and peace in his heart and a heavenly radiance filling his soul, brimful of love, until every human tear grows to the disciple's rapt sight a flower springing up before the feet of God.

In those dark days, before the Light came to him, wandering through a distracted world, standing alone on the grave of his boyhood's life, an empty heaven above and clanging voices around him, whose words seemed mere husks of sound with no fruitful kernel of sense beneath their scorn, George Fox learned to look *within*, and led thereto by the inspired Book in his hands, whose pages slowly grew luminous as he gazed, found the Light of the World imprisoned in his own soul, the Eternal Word nearer to him than mother or father, sister or brother, a portion of himself, life of his life, and yet the Christ, the Saviour; but bound, and bruised, and fainting beneath the cross of sin and self-indulgent carnal affections.

He learned many lessons during his pilgrimage. He learned that it is by no means enough to avoid great sins, as the world counts them great, and to live a decorous respected life. That "covetousness" is indeed as Paul said "idolatry," and that "covetousness" is a large, wide-spreading word,

with its roots in *all* merely selfish pleasure, in *all* purely personal living. He learned that a man must be as truly born again spiritually, as though practically he had just entered the world naked and helpless, and that sin must be as really loathsome to this new creature as leprosy is to the fleshly one. He learned, too, that there is no such thing as heresy, but that the Father of Spirits communicates with the spirits of His faithful ones, after a truly spiritual fashion, and reveals truth to them according to their several necessities, so that "by their fruits ye shall know them" is the only true test, and "he who is not against us is on our part" the only real judgment; and that consequently *all* religious persecution is blasphemy against His Spirit. He learned that it was to "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," the holy seed sown in every soul, that he must appeal; that Light which had grown dim, and been almost forgotten amid the artificial blaze of human candles, and priestly lamps and professing tapers; that seed which had been choked and overgrown by the tares of a worldly life and a lust for carnal things, for power and wealth in *themselves*. And as he strove faithfully to follow the guidance of this Light, the growth of this holy seed in his own spirit, slowly the Ideal to which he devoted his life, and to which Penn, and Barclay, and Caton, and Crisp, and Parnell, and innumerable other brave and earnest men devoted their lives, when he had led them to it, grew clear to his mind, until the eyes of his soul beheld the gospel preached at last to all nations!

We hear sometimes that the gospel has been preached now to nearly the whole world, but we shall do well to pause over this statement and ask ourselves, what Gospel? *Not* the Gospel of Jesus, the meek and lowly. *Not* the Gospel of the Teacher Who had not where to lay His head. *Not* the Gospel of untiring love to enemy and persecutor, to thief and murderer, that so, *somehow* and *somewhere*, they may be brought to repentence and God. *Not* the

Gospel which says "*love* is the fulfilment of the law," "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one to another." . . If we remember that Christianity means a *life*, not merely a *doctrine;* that Christ expressly says He is the *Way* not only the *Word*, we cannot say truly that this Gospel has been preached, while nations stand armed, watching each other with hand on sword. While patriotism is translated into murder and dynamite, into aggression and fraud. While the self-styled representatives of the Saviour, who was God Incarnate, yet chose the lowest human life to crown it with divinity—those who call themselves by His name and bear His words on their lips, go clad in purple and fine linen, take gold for betraying Him, by teaching the traditions of men, as surely as Judas took silver, and regardless of His teaching, are willing to grow rich and win titles and estates, and high positions in the State, while their weaker brethren grovel in want and degradation. While those "little ones" about whom the Master uttered one of the most terrible denunciations on record, are bruised, and wounded and slain. . . While drink and opium murder not only their bodies but their souls. . . While gambling and falsehood sap their moral faculties, and injustice sets a brand of shame on the weaker sister and lets the strong brother go free, though both have equally sinned. . .

What gospel has been preached we must sorrowfully ask, as George Fox asked? Happy for us and the world if we find an answer as he found it, and are ready to go forth, as he went, God's torchbearer to all seekers, rejoicing to the end of his life, whether beaten, or stoned, or imprisoned, heedless of threats, careless of persecution and punishment. Ready, with meekness and fear, to give a reason for the faith that was in him to Protector, or judge, or magistrate; to plead, protest and rebuke in the name of His Master, and to die at last with the blessed certainty that he had been the means of bringing thousands of captive-souled men and women out of the dungeons of a

dead creed, where chained to the corpse of what had once been a living faith, their spirits were dying or hopelessly paralysed, into the glorious liberty of the children of God!

CHAPTER II.

GEORGE FOX—THE PREACHER.

THE first members of our Society were called "Children of the Light," afterwards they called themselves "Friends of Truth," signifying by their name, and entirely creedless union, that they sought no partial Light, worshipped no narrow facet of truth. George Fox, surrounded on all sides as he was by churches, each claiming sole possession of truth, and divine power to brand all faiths outside their own doors as heresy, had no idea of founding another sect or sectarian church: he would have shrunk back in horror from the thought. He had a message from God to deliver to *all* who would listen, in this land and in all other lands, and looking round with his earnest awakened eyes upon the world and life we have endeavoured to sketch, and seeing it, not as we do to-day, softened and mellowed by distance, but emphasized by nearness in all its distracted misery, he turned his face steadfastly from the peaceful country life of his youth, and summoned all men in the name of the Light he had found, and whose witness was in each soul, to follow—not him, not the fallible symbol on the road to heaven—but the God-given Light in their own spirits, which would render the symbol recognizable.

His deeply-loved, much-studied Bible had guided him to the open secret of the Lord, and lo! he found the presence of the risen Saviour everywhere. "I am with you alway," came to him with a new sweet meaning, as slowly and falteringly at first, yet with ever-growing strength and certainty, he followed the brightening Light and found its rays cast on the footprints of the Lord Jesus, the source of all Love and Light, Who is perpetually absorbing all hatred and darkness into Himself, and transmuting them into goodness and radiance.

And this open secret which the Bible revealed to him was nothing less than Christ's own words, "the Kingdom of God is within you;" and he realized that religion means the *new life* in each one's soul, changing, renewing, purifying, until where the corpse of sin had lain, the sweet new flower-life of holiness blossomed. Nature, fallen though she be, better interprets the Lord's Spirit than man created in His own image, for everywhere she changes corruption into beauty, ugliness into grace, defilement into purity; transforming the world's dust-heaps into grassy hills, the world's graves into the sweet coolness of moss-grown homes for the growth of bright-eyed daisies, and the despised, but none the less lovely, golden stars of the dandelion.

It is one thing to peep and botanize upon a grave, but quite another to notice the wonderful love and care which covers the bare mound, visible symbol of earth's greatest bitterness and despair, with tender flowers of hope and promise, bearing up the sorrowing soul to its Father in Heaven. And this Nature had been George Fox's teacher as he wandered through the fields and woods. Nature and the Bible. Nature always striving to reach her first estate, the Bible showing the true way through the Cross of Christ.

The Breath of God was thus breathed into his spirit slowly, gradually, and he realized, as every seeker must realize, from the awakening of Paul, to the awakening of the humblest disciple to-day, that the sole object of a true life is to be an open channel for this Breath of God to pass through from him to the neighbour. And that to become this open channel we must escape from sin, our natures must be cleansed and purified, that, "be ye perfect," is no empty formula but a divine commandment to be obeyed. It may be objected that this was no new teaching, but had always been the inmost doctrine of all churches; but at that time, whatever may be the inmost doctrine now, few, if any, apart from Friends and Seekers, realized the

possibility of that sinlessness *here on earth* which Paul and John knew as such a blessed certainty. It was by no means the necessity of escape from hell they taught, and George Fox taught, but escape through fire, and torture, and imprisonment, yea, if it must be so, through death itself, from the loathsomeness of sin. . . This is the burden of all the early Friends' teaching. It is a yearning to escape from sin's darkness into the daily following of "the Light of Christ," in which the "new creature" could grow and cast out the old body of sin and death; and it was easier for a Friend, in the glow of that new and wonderful revelation, to be dragged to prison and kept there till death released him, than to deny what he believed to be his divine Master's commands, even by the simple doffing of a hat or using an empty title!

The early history of every church is full of martyr-pain and martyr-triumph; but probably, in comparison with numbers, no church can show so many martyrs as the Society of Friends. The history of the Meeting for Sufferings (a suggestive and most appropriate name) forms a grim and terrible record of cruelty and persecution, and a significant commentary on the toleration of the Reformed Churches. Barclay tells us in his "Inner Life of the Religious Sects of the Commonwealth," that between the years 1661 and 1697 no less than thirteen thousand five hundred and sixty-two Friends suffered imprisonment. One hundred and ninety-eight were transported over sea, and three hundred and thirty-eight died of their wounds, or in prison. Their property was confiscated, their goods spoiled and seized for tithes and church rates. They were dragged from their meetings to prison by brutal soldiery, the women insulted, the men stoned and beaten. In some places nearly all adult members of meetings were in prison at one time; and we are told, at Bristol and Reading, *the meetings were kept up by the children*, whose age exempted them from imprisonment, but who were confined in the stocks and *beaten unmercifully with twisted*

whalebone sticks. George Fox's autobiography is a typical history of a Quaker's life in those days. Nearly every page of it relates how he was beaten, or stoned, or attacked with naked swords, or abused, or imprisoned, and yet it is brimful of love and peace, and spiritual light and joy.

At first sight we may wonder why every man's hand seemed raised against these peaceable, inoffensive "children of the Light." Why saintly men like Baxter and Bunyan united with violent Ranters, Muggletonians and Fifth Monarchy men; with Episcopalians, Bishops, Presbyterian Divines, Independent Ministers and others, to revile and persecute them. But this wonder fades away when we consider that they protested against what they called "a man-made ministry," owned no outward sacraments, forms, rites, or ceremonies; paid no more apparent respect to a king than a beggar, though always scrupulously careful to render due service to each; taught that the Light that lighteth every man was the only true guide, both to the Scriptures and to life; and, though always ready to be judged by the general sense and spirit of the Bible, and yielding to none, either in knowledge of, or love and reverence for, the Holy Scriptures, apart from isolated texts, paying no more worship to the idol Book than the idol church! "We are always ready," they said, "to be judged by the Bible, for we believe it to have been written by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and He cannot contradict Himself, either as revealed in the Written Word or in the Spirit of Man. But the holy record must be *spiritually* interpreted, for 'the letter killeth,' and no exercise of the merely human reason alone can comprehend truth from partial statements or texts quoted irrespective of their context and bearing, on the whole spirit of the Book. Reason must indeed be used, proof must be required; spirits must be proved and judged by results, 'by their fruits ye shall know them,' the Master said. And what are these fruits? Are they not love, joy,

peace, and human reason illuminated by divine light?"

On these lines the early Friends tested the teaching of the churches around them, and found scattered rays of light, dim previsions, and passing apprehensions of the purely spiritual nature of the Gospel of Jesus here and there, amid much darkness and corruption. Menno Simons, for instance, denied that his followers were a sect; held that no Christian could bear arms, or swear, or wage war, or execute revenge in any way, and that magistrates should be obeyed in all things not contrary to the Word of God; he used adult baptism, and administered the Lord's Supper twice or thrice a year; he allowed no merchant among his followers to arm his ship, or make any appeal to a Court of Law. The Mennonites excommunicated all who married unregenerate persons, and allowed no unnecessary ornament in dress. They began their worship by singing, and then all engaged in silent prayer; they also made a long silent pause of thanksgiving before meals. John Smyth, a separatist pastor, at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries, says, that "to bind a regenerate man to a book, in prayer, preaching, or singing, is to set the Holy Ghost to school!" He held that the New Testament is spiritual, and that reading out of a book (though a lawful ecclesiastical action) is no part of spiritual worship. Barrow, who was hung in the time of Elizabeth for his separatist opinions, objects to heathenish names for the days and months, to wearing mourning, etc. These are a few instances, but Barclay (Inner Life, etc.) gives countless examples to show that the doctrines preached by George Fox were flitting about in a more or less shadowy fashion, waiting for his valiant spirit and strong loving heart to set them forth, illuminated by that Light within on which he so strongly insisted, and whose pure fire fused these scattered fragments of truth into the beautiful whole of a faith, which delivered men from the bondage of sin and fear, and made a holy, harmless, peace-

able life the prelude to a joyful and triumphant death.

The Seekers, as we have seen, declared that they were waiting for an angel or apostle, able in the spirit to give visible demonstration of his mission; and George Fox, who, while a Seeker amongst the churches, had often joined the two or three gathered together in Christ's name, and been given words of comfort and hope to deliver to them, now came openly forward and pointed to the Light within their souls as the witness from God to his teaching, and a great number of these earnest men and women recognized the truth and joined him, carrying the good news, in their turn, to other Seekers throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The ground and foundation of George Fox's teaching was the entirely spiritual nature of Christianity; "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," and the necessity of a personal revelation of Christ to each individual. He taught that God had lighted in each soul a divine lamp, whose radiance was sufficient to manifest truth, and if faithfully followed and kept burning, to lead men to Himself. He taught the absolute necessity of regeneration, the new birth, which is "Christ in us." The new life, which grafting the human twig on to the divine stem, makes Christ the Vine, and all His followers the branches; so that one vital current pulses through all, absorbing and making pure every sinful and hurtful property, until from the wild acrid berries of the earthly fruitage are developed the wonderful grapes of God.

But this must needs be a slow and gradual process. The awakening, indeed, is usually sudden. The springing into visible flame, the life coming into the lifeless substance, are the swiftest actions of which we have any knowledge; but the gradual growth into a steady illumination, and the slow development of the living germ—of the seed into the tree—are processes as gradual as they are certain; and so George Fox lays great stress on *waiting for guidance*, on

watching prayerfully the growth of the Light and Seed which are Christ's, and making room in the soul for their development by casting away the worldly spirit, and the carnal desire. "Stand still in the Light, and submit to it, and the other will be hushed and gone; and then content comes. And when temptations and trouble appear, sink down in that which is pure, and all will be hushed, and fly away. Your strength is to stand still, after ye see yourselves . . . and earthly reason will tell you what ye shall lose: hearken not to that but stand still in the Light, and then strength comes from the Lord, and help contrary to your expectation; then ye grow up in peace, and no trouble shall move you." "Walk out of the world's vain customs, ordinances and commands, and stand a witness against them all, in the testimony of Jesus; and witness Him, the substance of all, waiting in the Light of God, and walking in it: then will ye have unity one with another, and the *blood*" (which we must remember is expressly said to be the *life*) "*of Jesus Christ will cleanse you from all sin;* for through it and by it we do overcome. . . O wait all in that which is pure, to be fed alone of God with the eternal, living food!" "And dwell in that which is pure of God in you, lest your thoughts get forth, and then evil thoughts get up, and surmising one against another, which arise out of the veiled mind. But as ye dwell in that which is of God, it guides you up out of the elementary life, and out of the mortal into the immortal (which is hid from all the fleshly ones) where is peace and joy eternal to all that can witness the new birth. Babes in Christ, born again of the immortal Seed, *in it wait.*" "Whatever ye are addicted to, the tempter will come in that thing. . . ." "Take heed to your spirits, that which is hasty discerns not the good Seed. Take heed of being corrupted by flatteries. . . All mind your gift, mind your measure, mind your calling and your work. . . Beware of discouraging any in the work of God." "To all you who have tasted of the immediate working power of the Lord, and do find an

alteration in your minds . . wait upon God in that which is pure. Though you see little, and know little, and have little, and see your emptiness, and see your nakedness, and barrenness, and unfruitfulness, and see the hardness of your hearts and your own unworthiness, it is the Light that discovers all this, and the love of God to you. . . So, wait upon God in that which is pure in your measure, and stand still in it every one, to see your Saviour, to make you free from that which the Light doth discover to you to be evil. . . Mind that Light in you, that shows you sin and evil, which checks you when you speak an evil word, and tells you that ye should not be proud, nor wanton, nor fashion yourselves like unto the world, for the *fashion of this world passeth away*. If ye hearken to the Light in you, it will not suffer you to conform to the evil ways, customs, fashions, delights, and vanities of the world; it will lead you to purity, to holiness, to uprightness, even to the Lord. Dear hearts, hearken to it, to be guided by it: *for if ye love the Light, ye love Christ; if ye hate that, ye hate Christ.*"

This waiting—standing still in the Light—is the necessary preparation; but he never lets us forget that it is *only* the preparation—the knight's vigil before the fight. Nor does he ever fall into the snare of teaching that this Light is any *natural* one, any illumination attainable by the mind or intellect. It is *Christ in us;* it is the personal revelation of the Father of Spirits to the spiritual germ in the merely human, and by its aid alone do we become capable of that spiritual communion which is the end and aim of all noble life and action.

Having found this faint glimmer of eternal Light, we are to *wait* in it until it has slowly strengthened and, like a sunbeam, as we watch the sunrise, make a gleaming pathway between our spirits and the Sun of Righteousness. When once the communication is established, down this radiant ladder the angels pass and repass: the angels of love, joy, peace, self-sacrifice, noble thoughts, and pure

heroic actions, and each opens a fast-barred door or darkened window of the earthly nature, and with a winged desire cleanses more and more the human channel through which the Breath of God must pass, until at last *all things are new*, and the King of Glory can come in and abide with the regenerate spirit of His worshipper. Then, amid an unspeakable joy, a mighty peace, the Lord descends and bears the yearning, purified soul company, and never afterwards can that soul bow before any lesser image. Jesus has revealed Himself to the disciple again as of old, and again the answer breaks forth, "Thou art the Christ! the Desire of our spirits, the Light of our spiritual eyes; though we should die with Thee, yet we will not deny Thee!" And, although the flesh is weak, and the truest human love sometimes sleeps at the time of greatest need, and denies its deepest faith, yet, always the bitterness of remorse and repentance follows swiftly, and the discrowned love grows stronger and nobler for the pain, if it has once recognized *Thou art the Christ.* Peter's bitter weeping washed away the last traces of the earthly seeking for a kingdom, in which the Master he loved should be King, but in which he should also hold high office; and he went forward, pardoned and humbled, towards that torturing death-hour, wherein he should not *deny* but *glorify* the crucified Lord before a scornful world.

Having thus found the Light, we are to let it "*shine before men*, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." George Fox's teaching being so purely spiritual, is also intensely practical. It is no use finding the Light, and sinking into a mystical dream of delight as we watch it, it must *shine before men.*— It must reveal all the dark corners and hidden sins in life and the world. It must strive to make the *earth* a new creature, as well as the individual. To make the world a fit dwelling for Christ, as well as the spirit of man. "Improve your talents," he says, "labouring in the vine-

yard, dressing in the Lord's vineyard, that ye may be found faithful servants, and all walking in love to God, and one to another." "And so walk in the righteousness that your feet may be kept in the way of peace; and keep both your tongues, and hands, and bodies, and lips, and minds, and words, out of all that which would defile and corrupt you. . . Let not things visible draw your minds away from the Lord."

"It is no sin to be tempted, but to enter into the temptation that is sin. . . Beware ye enter not into the *temptation to lust after the creature*, and give not way to a *lazy, dreaming mind*, for it enters into temptations." "Take heed of judging the measures of others, but every one mind your own. . . And though the way seems to thee diverse, *yet judge not the way, lest thou judge the Lord;* and knowest not that several ways (seeming so to reason) hath God to bring His people out by, yet are all but one in the end. . . Therefore, silence all flesh, and see that *your own ways be clean.* . . Judge not one another, neither lay open one another's weakness behind one another's back. And let there be no backbiting amongst you . . *see yourselves*, that self may be judged out with the Light in every one. I warn and charge you all, that there be no keeping of old things in store in the mind or memory, *heart-rising one against another*, or backbiting among you, or speaking evil one of another, but judge that out by the Light of Christ. Every one of you abide in your calling, waiting upon God where He hath called you, . . and there walk in newness of life. Take heed of forward minds, and of running out before your guide; . . be not hasty or rash, but see the way He made clear; and as the Lord doth move you, so do, and return with speed. . . Be diligent every one in your places where the Lord hath set you." "Take heed of vain words, and tattling idle words, but everywhere stop such; . . beware of a brittle, peevish, hasty, fretful mind. . . And all Friends everywhere, take heed of

wronging the world or anyone in bargains, or over-reaching them."

Most lovingly and continually he warns Friends against the snare of too great eagerness in money-making. Pleading with them that their minds may "go *over*" worldly things, and not rest in them. . . He constantly warns them, also, never to rest contented with setting forth the truth until they have reached the witness of God in each soul. "Tread over the *dead*," he says, "and that which works in that nature, and reach to the witness in all, so will ye stand for God."

Nor does he confine this advice to any creed or nationality, but earnestly exhorts those who possess slaves to bring them into the truth, treat them kindly, as brethren and members of Christ's body, and set them free. Indeed, George Fox seems to have been the first who recognized the iniquity of the traffic in slaves. He speaks in the same way about the Indians; pleading that truth may be declared to them, and that in all things they may be treated with justice and mercy. "*God hath made all nations of one blood*," he says, "and he commands to love *all men*, for Christ so loved *all* that He died for sinners, and so ye are to have the mind of Christ, and to be merciful, as your Heavenly Father is merciful."

He is as anxious as the most ardent modern missionary that "Truth may be spread abroad," and exhorts all Friends, who have friends or relations beyond sea, to send them books and papers, to get books translated into all languages, and whenever possible, to study these languages for themselves, that they may preach to all nations, and carry the Light to all peoples. His own travels were very extensive; and we have only to read his account in the Autobiography to see how unsparing he was of his own life, time, and means. England he traversed from North to South many times, only pausing when imprisoned. Wales, Ireland, Barbadoes, Jamaica, North America, Maryland, Carolina and Virginia, Holland, Germany — in

all these countries he travelled, preaching and holding meetings, exhorting, reproving, encouraging friends, comforting slaves and Indians, settling the affairs of the growing church, establishing Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, and carrying the Light of his spiritual faith and holy life into all the darkened corners of the world himself, as well as entreating others to do the like. And travelling in those days was very different to what it is now. In America, frequently for many days and nights, he did not enter a house or lie upon a bed. A fire was lighted in the woods, and the wet and weary travellers laid themselves down, and rested as best they could. But Fox never quailed, never murmured. William Penn, who travelled much with him, says, "He was an incessant labourer. The care he took of the affairs of the church in general was very great, and as he was unmarried, so he was undaunted in his service for God and His people: he was no more to be moved to fear than to wrath. And truly, I must say, that though God had visibly clothed him with a divine preference and authority, and indeed his very presence expressed a religious majesty, yet he never abused it, but he held his place in the Church of God with great meekness, and a most engaging humility and moderation. For upon all occasions, like his blessed Master, he was a servant to all, holding and exercising his eldership in the invisible power that had gathered them, with reverence to the Head and care over the body, and was received only in that spirit and power of Christ as the first and chief elder in this age, who as he was therefore worthy of double honour, so for the same reason it was given by the faithful of this day; because his authority was inward and not outward, and that he got it and kept it by the love of God and power of an endless life. I write my knowledge and not report, and my witness is true, having been with him for weeks and months together on divers occasions, and those of the nearest and most exercising nature, and that by night and by day, by sea and by land, in this and

in foreign countries, and I can say I never saw him out of his place, or not a match for every service or occasion. For in all things he acquitted himself like a man. Yea, a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man. A divine and a naturalist, and all of God Almighty's making. I have been surprised at his questions and answers in natural things; that while he was ignorant of useless and sophistical science, he had in him the foundation of useful and commendable knowledge, and cherished it everywhere. Civil beyond all forms of breeding in his behaviour, he was very temperate, eating little, and sleeping less."

The whole of William Penn's testimony should be read, and the testimonies of all the other Friends who were brought into close contact with George Fox, in order to gain an idea of the mingled strength and love, power and meekness, of the great founder of Quakerism. There seems to have been no narrowness of any sort in his mind. He was as Spinosa has been called with far less justice, a "God-intoxicated man." "Do rightly," he says, "that is the word of the Lord God to you all, whether ye be tradesmen, of what calling or profession, or sort soever, or husbandmen; do rightly, justly, truly, holily, equally, to all people in all things; and that is according to that of God in every man, and the witness of God, and the wisdom of God, and the life of God in yourselves . . . and all merchants whatsoever, seamen and traffickers by sea or land . . . *do justly, speak truly to all people whatsoever.* . . Wrong no man, over-reach no man, (if it may be never so much to your advantage,) but be plain, righteous and holy. . . Loathe deceit, hardheartedness, wronging, cozening, cheating, or unjust dealing . . . doing truth to all without respect to persons, to high or low, rich or poor, young or old; *and so here your lives and words will preach wherever ye come.* Speak truth, *act truth.* . This goes *over* the unjust, untrue, unholy, and unrighteous in the world, and reacheth to the good and true principle of God in all people, which tells them when they do not do

equally, justly, righteously, and holily. *Let your lives preach. Owe no man anything but love.*"

Let your lives preach, that is the true keynote of all religious teaching! And just as George Fox laid stress on the *waiting in the Light* until the personal revelation of Christ appeared to the disciple and the new creature was born, so afterwards under all forms of preaching and living, he insisted on the silent but mighty voice of the life. Guard your tongues, but before all things guard your thoughts, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the flesh acteth! And we have only to consider a few of the practical reforms advocated by him to see how wide a sphere of influence is filled by each individual life when faithful to the Light within.

We have already touched on his missionary work, and his efforts to ameliorate the condition of slaves and Indians. What is now called the Temperance Movement had also a firm and enlightened supporter in him. He advocated the strict regulation of all dram shops, also that their numbers should be confined to what were absolutely necessary for bonâ fide travellers, and that those who kept them should be trustworthy, honest men, who would not allow people to take more than was good for them. He proposed to establish a labour bureau under government, in order to bring employers and employed conveniently together. He instituted fixed prices for all buying and selling; (some of the early Baptist Churches in Holland followed this custom it is said, but Friends were the first to make it the rule of trade). He protested against the support of a particular church by the State, and against all man-made ministers. He strongly advocated prison reform, and the bringing of prisoners to speedy justice, and never ceased to bring this subject before magistrates, judges, and the government, together with the amelioration of the criminal code, and the proper treatment, and reformation of female prisoners. He was one of the first, if not *the* first advocates of the equality of the sexes, and established the women's meet-

ings to correspond with the men's amongst Friends, in the face of great opposition. In his Epistles on "The station of women in the church," he triumphantly vindicates the equal position of women with men, whether in worship, preaching, or daily practical life, and gives a wonderful list of women from the Bible who took an equal part with men in all things. In many of his other epistles he goes over the same ground, adducing fresh arguments, and advocating perfect equality between men and women; and indeed the early women Friends justified this by their earnestness, and steadfastness; by the unflinching bravery with which they bore punishment, and imprisonment, insult, and the spoiling of their goods; and the equal share they took in the work of the early Church, whether in preaching or organizing. . .

Equally remarkable, in those times, is the uncompromising way in which he advocates universal toleration—a reaching to the Holy Seed and Light in all souls.—"They know not of what spirit they are of that persecute," he says, "and would have men's lives destroyed about their church, worship, and religion; for Christ said, "*He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* These that would destroy men's lives are not the ministers of Christ, the Saviour." "See the sects," he says again, "how they are like tradesmen, plucking from one church to another, and getting customers, and drawing people from one another's church to their own ways; and tearing one another to pieces, to get people from one another's church to themselves. . . Christ said *I am the Way;* and He is over all the fallen ways. . ."

He protested strongly, on every occasion, against the enormity of the death penalty; and preached to judges, magistrates, constables, soldiers, tavern-keepers, merchants, shop-keepers, and all classes and conditions of men to do justice, and live holily and righteously, and in harmony with his favourite phrase: "let your lives preach." He organized with wonderful skill, foresight and wisdom, the

government of the Church he had founded; arranged for a scrupulously accurate record of births, deaths, and marriages, to be kept at all the meetings; for the care and education of the poor, and widows, and the religious training of the children; for the due observance of the purely spiritual worship he taught, and in fact for everything in the life of a citizen wishing to serve God, and the neighbour, in the Light of Christ revealed "in spirit and in truth."

CHAPTER III.

FRIENDS' BOOK OF DISCIPLINE. *

WE have thus seen George Fox as the Seeker, and the Preacher; we have now to consider him as the Organizer of a form of church government which has lasted, with no alterations, save those of natural growth and development, since he first established it more than two hundred years ago.

In considering this part of our subject it will not be necessary to describe the *machinery* for the application of the discipline which has been so admirably done by Caroline E. Stephen in her most interesting and valuable book,* *Quaker Strongholds*, but rather the discipline itself, regarded as producing the *life that preaches* (George Fox's key note) in all professing truth. The Friends' "Book of Discipline," which has grown gradually from Yearly Meeting to Yearly Meeting since their permanent establishment in London, in 1672, presents probably the highest ideal of the Christian life, both from its spiritual and its practical side, of any book or church in the world.

It affords a deeply interesting subject for study, not only to the Members of the Society for whom it has been written, and compiled, but for everyone, whatever his or her religious, or anti-religious opinions may be; inasmuch as it offers an ideal of noble life, which may be followed by *all*, quite apart from any individual views of God. For although, when separated from the spiritual light which hallows and glorifies it, it is shorn of its beauty, and true proportions, yet as a model of practical usefulness, both

* "Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends." Price 2s. 6d. * "Quaker Strongholds." Price 1s. Published by Edward Hicks, Jun., 14, Bishopsgate Without, and 2, Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, London.

for the nation and the individual, it has never been surpassed—we believe never equalled.

The first edition of this book appeared under the title of "Extracts from the minutes and advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in London from its first institution," in 1783. This was followed by an Appendix in 1792; a revised edition in 1802; a supplement in 1822; a revised edition in 1834, under the title "Rules of Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends, with advices, being extracts from the minutes and epistles of their Yearly Meeting, held in London from its first institution"; a supplement in 1849; a revised edition in 1861, under the title "Extracts from the minutes and epistles of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held in London from its first institution to the present time, relating to Christian Doctrine, Practice, and Discipline." And another, and at present final edition, under the title "Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain," in 1883. The preface to the first edition thus explains its origin: "The Yearly Meeting having been apprehensive that in some Quarterly and Monthly Meetings due care hath not been taken to preserve and enter regularly in the books kept for that purpose those minutes and advices which from its first institution have occasionally been communicated to them, for establishing and conducting the discipline of the church, hath seen fit to direct that those minutes and advices should be carefully extracted and properly arranged under suitable heads, and be comprised in one volume, for the general service of the Society." Then after describing how carefully the present book was compared with ancient documents, and ordering it to be printed and given to every Quarterly and Monthly Meeting, so that all the churches might be in unity both in doctrine and discipline, the young people instructed, and the disorderly and unfaithful reproved and reclaimed, or at the last, after every effort had failed, disunited with, the preface adds, evidently in the fear Friends have always

felt, of acting from mere creaturely activity. "We are not, however, without a clear sense that this publication will prove insufficient to produce the desired effect, unless we are very careful to move and act under the immediate influence of the Spirit of Christ in the pure love of the Gospel, a close adherence to which would render a multiplicity of rules unnecessary. And whilst we are earnestly recommending this work to the notice and regard of Friends, we cannot omit to press upon them a diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures, as superior to all the other writings, for instruction." The preface concludes with a note of hope, for, after lamenting "the torrent of vice and irreligion," and saying, that notwithstanding this torrent, many are still faithful, it finishes with, "many of them (i.e. the faithful) doubtless, are at times secretly mourning over the great desolations which infidelity and immorality have made in the Christian world. Nevertheless, they are comforted at seasons in the hope of better times, and helped to look forward with an eye of faith and with unshaken confidence to the gradual increase of that day when darkness shall no longer cover the earth, nor gross darkness the hearts of the people; when the spiritual kingdom of Christ shall be exalted over all, and that glorious ancient prophesy fulfilled; 'when He shall have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; and when the saving knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea!'"

From George Fox onwards, the *true* Friend has always been a diligent student of the Bible, and has found, by close reading and earnest pondering over that Holy Volume, that gradually a clearer comprehension and more undimmed vision of its inner meaning has dawned upon him. The words, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all

the truth. . ." uttered by Christ, have been true since man's creation, and will be true until the end of time. But the spirit developes very slowly, very gradually, and if the wine of God's wisdom is poured in too full measure, into the shallow vessel, it overbrims and is spilled. Even then it is not altogether lost, it must fertilize every spot, however barren and rocky, on which it falls, but it can only be *assimilated* by the renewed human nature, and by strengthening and purifying *that*, fulfil its true office. And the Light of Christ must gradually grow brighter in the spirit of man before he comprehends the truths of the Bible in their due order and proportion. Slowly, as he watches and waits in this dawning light, he is guided into the knowledge of divine things, and realizes the certainty of spiritual companionship and the continual operation of beneficent forces in and around him, despite persecution, sickness, imprisonment, death. The knowledge that his risen Lord has become a part of himself, the veritable Light of life in the lantern of the body, transforming the physical into the psychical, and that again into the spiritual, and introducing not in some distant heaven, but *here* and *now*, purity, holiness, blessedness, the ever-present perpetual Paradise of Christ's presence, is what the true Friend sought in the 17th century, and in some measure found: it is what he will still seek in the 20th century, and find in fuller measure and deeper blessedness.

And what Friends found in the Bible, interpreted by the Holy Spirit, they endeavoured to embody in their Books of Extracts and Discipline (the authoratative statements of their views and aims) for the guidance of all "professing the truth. . ." It is a curious and significant sign of the falling off in faith and enthusiasm, which marked the middle period of Quakerism, that, until the issue of the "Rules of Discipline," etc., in 1834, Friends were always spoken of as "persons professing the truth," and Friends' teaching as "the principles of truth;" but at that time and afterwards, Friends were merely called "members of

our religious Society," and their teaching "our religious principles." This is a sad descent from George Fox's ideas. He constantly, in all his epistles and other writings, says, "there is *no sect nor schism in the Gospel*, but an everlasting fellowship, the truth of God certified to by the witness He hath set in all men's souls." And it is to this witness in men, this Inner Light, that he appeals, and all the early Friends appealed, whether addressing slaves or Indians, their own countrymen or foreigners, priests or Ranters, or the Turks and slave-owners of Barbary and Algiers. It was not the principles of any *religious Society*, but the Gospel, the *life of Christ*, which they preached to all nations. Alas! how has the universal-saving divine Light been lessened and dimmed when reduced to the mere earthly candle of a separate creed! How have we sold our birthright, when, instead of being children of the Light and friends of truth, drawn together by the spiritual bond of a universal brotherhood, "One is your Master or Teacher, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," we band ourselves into the narrow limits of a Society with a birthright membership, not depending on the birth of that "new creature" which is "Christ in us," but on the merely physical birth of nature! Forgetful that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole," we have endeavoured to keep the leaven apart, and behold it has wasted away!

We shall return to this subject again, but will now review briefly the "*Book of Discipline*," and note as we do so its entirely universal and unsectarian teaching, founded on the Bible as a whole, with no seeking out of favourite texts, or passages selected to uphold the traditions of men, but the Bible read in the light and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and interpreted in a purely spiritual sense.

As mentioned before, there have been five editions of the "Book of Discipline" issued, with several supplements, since 1783, when the first edition appeared, compiled from documents dating many of them from the beginning of

Friends' ministry. Having carefully compared these various volumes, we find that, although in some matters such as marriage outside the Society or with first cousins, the enjoyment of music, payment of tithes, uniformity of dress and language, etc., the tendency has been gradually to allow freer play to individual taste and judgment, yet in all things that constitute the Ideal held up by George Fox and the noble men who gathered round him, there has been no change. There is the same clearness and insistency in the later minutes and advices as in the older ones, with regard to simplicity of life and spirituality of worship, and the duty of peaceableness in conduct and speech, united with the perpetual strife to set the crooked straight by unwearied love and untiring service — by the life that is first "pure," and then "peaceable"—the life that shows forth the Light of Christ by making sunshine in the world's shady places; while on many subjects the later portions of the book speak with even greater distinctness and urgency. As for instance on such subjects as the disuse of intoxicating liquors; the entire abolition of slavery all over the world; the substitution in all cases, of arbitration for war; the necessity for absolute purity in thought and life, both for men and women; the rising standard of education, which, after the first blossoming of Quakerism had fallen into transient neglect through the great difficulty of obtaining cultured teachers in an age of severe persecution; the revival of missionary enterprise (both home and foreign); and the adult school movement, which, with its connected Savings' Bank, is having such a wonderful influence for good on the artizan class.

The book begins with quotations from George Fox's epistles, from various Yearly Meeting epistles, and other documents, laying stress on Jesus Christ having "tasted death for *every man*," and being "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," and the "true light which enlightens every man coming into the world; and that, therefore, men are to believe in the light, that they may

become the children of the light." It proceeds to declare its belief in the Inspiration of Scripture, and with the caution Friends have always used where truths are not absolutely clear, it continues, "what Holy Scripture plainly declares and testifies we have always been ready to embrace," but where it is "silent or vague, we do not enquire too curiously." Friends have hitherto, whatever errors they may have fallen into, avoided that usual one in the churches of attempting to define the undefinable, and reduce the spiritual intuition to the physical manifestation! "We desire that, as the mere profession of sound Christian doctrine will not avail to the salvation of the soul, all may attain to a living, efficacious faith, which through the power of the Holy Ghost bringeth forth fruit unto holiness; the end whereof is everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Christ's righteous precepts were illustrated and confirmed by His own holy example. He went about doing good; for us He endured sorrow, hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, unutterable anguish of body and of soul, even unto death. . . Thus humbling Himself that we might be exalted, He emphatically recognized the duties and the sufferings of humanity as among the means whereby, through the obedience of faith, we are to be disciplined for heaven; sanctifying them to us, by Himself performing and enduring them; and as 'the Forerunner,' at once plainly marking out and consecrating for His followers the path in which they must tread." "The Gospel is a message of glad tidings to man as he is, in order that he may become what he is not. It deals not with speculation but with fact." "Without conversion they who have but a birthright amongst us may, notwithstanding all their advantages of training and education, grow old, still enquiring, like Nicodemus, 'How can these things be?' To every member of each successive generation the answer of the Lord is alike applicable: 'Ye must be born again.'"

"The worship of God under the Gospel consists not in

ceremonies or in external observances. It is a simple *spiritual* service." "No worship ought now to be made dependent upon the presence of any one man, or order of men; no service, or stated vocal utterance in the congregation, ought to be allowed to interfere with the operations of the Lord's free Spirit." "It is the prerogative of Christ to call and qualify by the Holy Spirit His servants to minister in word and doctrine. . . and we believe He continues to call, from the young and from the old, from the unlearned, and from the wise, from the poor and from the rich, from women as well as from men, those whom He commissions to declare unto others the way of salvation... We consider the gift of the ministry of so pure and sacred a nature, that no payment should be made for its exercise, and that it ought never to be undertaken for pecuniary remuneration. . . The worship which Christ appointed is a worship for which He provided no ritual. It may be without words, as well as with them; but, whether in silence or in utterance, it must be 'in spirit and in truth.' . . It continues to be our settled conviction that, in establishing this 'New Covenant,' the Lord Jesus Christ did not design that there should be any rite or outward observance of permanent obligation in His church. His teaching, as in His parables, or as in the command to wash one another's feet, was often in symbols; but it ought ever to be received in the light of His own emphatic declaration, 'the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' His baptism is the baptism with 'the Holy Ghost and with fire.' He is Himself 'the bread of life.' The eating of His body and the drinking of His blood is not an outward act. They truly partake of them who habitually rest upon the sufferings and death of their Lord as their only hope, and to whom the indwelling Spirit gives of the fulness which is in Christ. It is this inward and spiritual partaking which is, as we believe, the true supper of the Lord. The new commandment.... is, according to His own teaching, that of *Love*,—a love

like His own,—love, grounded on the 'peace' given by Him, and sustained and made fruitful by a continual participation in His life. His presence with His church is not to be by symbol or by representation, but in the real communication of His own Spirit. . . In the withdrawal of His bodily presence, this blessed Comforter remains to the church the pledge of the power and continued care of its exalted King. He convinces of sin, He testifies of Jesus; He takes of the things of Christ, communicating to the believer and to the church in a gracious abiding manifestation, the *Real Presence* of the Lord." "Union with Him is life; separation from Him is death. . . His union with His people upon earth must, of necessity, be a spiritual union, and it is our privilege to believe that this union is to be enjoyed through the *immediate* presence of His own Spirit."

We have quoted briefly thus far from the "doctrine," we now proceed to examine this doctrine developed into "practice," and it is here that the wisdom and love with which Friends have always striven to reach their ideal of the Christ-life in the human spirit, becomes apparent. Worship, public and private, naturally comes first. "We recognize the value of silence not as an end, but as a means towards the attainment of the end; a silence not of listlessness or of vacant musing, but of holy expectation before the Lord."

Friends have always found, as George Fox found, that it is by silent waiting in the light He gives, that we gradually attain to that "perfect day" wherein communion with the Father of Spirits is a blessed fact and constant experience of daily life, enfolding our spirits with divine breaths of freshness, and encircling us, like a summer sunrise, with a warm radiance which sets all things in heaven and earth in a new and fairer atmosphere, until, in that pure *lumen* material objects and earthly desires assume their true proportions, and the life on earth is seen to be but the shadow of the eternal one,

as the painted picture is but the shadow of the real person.

"Let every one be watchful against an earthly spirit.... the aim and design of every true gospel minister is to direct the minds of all to the divine teaching of the Holy Spirit, and to wait upon and have their whole trust and expectation on the Lord alone. . . Pure worship under the gospel stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms: it may be without words as well as with them, but it *must* be 'in spirit and in truth.' It is not the mere outward gathering together, but the inward gathering of our hearts unto the Lord, that makes a true Meeting for worship. . . Where two or three are gathered in the name of Christ, there is a church, and Christ, the living Head, in the midst of them. . . While not unmindful of our own great needs, we should nevertheless allow our hearts to be drawn into sympathy with the wants of the assembled congregation; especially recognizing it as a duty on these occasions to be exercised before the Lord on behalf of our brethren and sisters, that their needs may be supplied, that the Holy Spirit may work in their hearts, that the word in season may be spoken, and that if that word be given to ourselves, we may be strengthened to utter it, without waiting for large openings in ministry, but standing ready to hand out the portion given us to distribute by the Great Master of our assemblies. . . That which is to be sought after is not silence merely, but worship—even the worship of the Father 'in spirit and in truth. . . .' Guard against an expenditure of time and strength upon the things of earth, which leaves little to be devoted to the interests of the soul. . . Far from thinking that we must absent ourselves because when the hour for meeting comes round our minds are full of family, professional, or business cares, from which we seem powerless to part, let us persevere in our attendance, and take all the burden to our Heavenly Father. Help comes in the very endeavour to forget our own needs, and

to seek in prayer the welfare of our fellow-worshippers, with whose difficulties we are thus enabled more fully to sympathize." And then comes the practical touch which is never wanting amid the highest spirituality of Friends' teaching: "A *punctual* attendance at the hour appointed for public worship is a matter of no small importance. If we hurry away from our outward occupations to the Meeting-house, thinking that by the delay of a few minutes we shall not be long behind our brethren, we are in great danger of having our thoughts employed on that in which we have been engaged, and of interrupting that holy silence which, it is believed, would often prevail if all the members of a Meeting were assembled not only in one place, but at one time, with one and the same great object in view."

Everyone must acknowledge that this is a sublime conception of public worship, and the true gospel definition of a church:—the gathering together of faithful seekers after the things of God, waiting in watchful and yearning silence for the Lord's promised Presence, and listening, within the house of the spirit, for the faintest knock which shall herald His arrival, for the lowest whisper which shall come from His lips seeking utterance through the mouths of His children.

But public worship is the smaller portion of the religious life. If we are *faithful* in the gathering of ourselves together, Christ gives us indeed mighty gifts, both for ourselves and others, but the larger portion of worship is included in private devotions. In the *breathing out* of the spirit, alone with its Beloved, all its longing and joy; all its pain and anguish; its strivings toward purity and holiness; its apprehensions of unspeakable things; its yearning for clearer light, closer communion, truer service,—and the *breathing in* that voiceless comfort, strength, peace and consolation,—that love-message, which we call Inspiration, — that light and power which hallow the humblest duty, the lowest service, and make the lonely

earth-life realize with a certainty as far above any logical proof as the star-strewn sky is above the earth, that lover and Beloved are indeed *one!*

"I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred,—
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod,
In love and worship, blends itself with God."

And that the spirit of the lowliest worshipper not only *blends itself* with God through love, but *is itself* a portion and child of the Eternal Father of Spirits, bound to its Source by the resistless laws of spiritual kinship. Separated, indeed, from its home for a season, but journeying nearer each day of its pilgrimage, and with each breath of yearning aspiration laying up for itself a new rapture in the everlasting re-union which is drawing near with ever-quickening footsteps. . . This blessed communion is, thank God, a reality beyond any words to many of us; indeed, what words can express it?

"Woe is me!
The winged words on which my soul would pierce
Into the height of Love's rare universe
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire."—

To those who live and breathe in the atmosphere of the divine Presence, words only dim the Light, mock the beauty, mar the joy; while to those unhappy ones outside the gate they will be but "sound and fury signifying nothing!"

Let us listen to our book on private prayer: "Frequent waiting in the stillness on the Lord for the renewal of strength keeps the mind at home in its proper place and duty, and out of all unprofitable association and converse . . much hurt may accrue to the religious mind by long and frequent conversation on temporal matters, especially by interesting ourselves too much in them; for there is a leaven therein, which, being suffered to prevail, indisposes and benumbs the soul, and prevents its frequent ascendings in living aspiration towards the Fountain of

eternal life. . . Prayer being, in the Divine appointment, essential to our spiritual health, we would earnestly press upon all to seek for opportunities, in the course of each day, for private retirement and waiting upon the Lord; and tenderly to cherish those precious, but often gentle and easily-resisted motions of the Lord's Spirit, which would contrite and humble our hearts, and draw them forth in fervent petitions for that spiritual food which alone can supply our daily, our continual need. . . The practice of frequent retirement, and of seeking counsel and blessing from the Lord in humble dependence upon His guidance, is one of unspeakable value." "Little prayer implies little faith: and with little faith there can be but little love. . . Prayer is the duty and privilege of all, of every age and of every class. Life presses on with its inevitable engagements. He who is a stranger to prayer enters upon them in his own strength, and finds to his unspeakable loss that a life without prayer is a life practically without God." "Be not afraid, dear friends, to open your hearts wide that you may receive of this blessing (the gift of the Spirit of Grace.) Let your ears be awakened to hear the gentlest whispers of His love. As retirement and waiting upon God in prayer and praise become habitual, they will lead to a sense of their preciousness in the family and social circle."

And again in the paragraphs on reading the Scriptures: "Let not the period of silent waiting, on these occasions, be so short as to exclude or interrupt inward retirement and prayer. . ." "Wait and pray for that divine immediate teaching, which can alone effectually illuminate its pages, and unfold their contents to the eye of the soul. As this is our humble endeavour, the various features of Divine truth will be gradually unfolded to the seeking mind. We beseech you, dear Friends, carefully to avoid all partial and exclusive views of religion, for these have ever been found to be the nurse of error. The Comforter alone can open the understanding to 'the truth as it is in

Jesus,' and to a right sense of its harmony and just proportions. And there are experiences of the inner life which, though in perfect unison with Scripture, may not be there literally described. They can only be understood as they are unfolded to the soul, waiting in simple dependence upon that Spirit Who 'searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God!' The Inspiration of the Scriptures will become not a matter of opinion merely but of experience, as the great Inspirer of all Scripture opens and applies the precious truths which are there revealed. Such an experience as this is still the true antidote to that speculative unbelief which pervades so much of the popular reading of the present day. For the Truth there is nothing to fear: it is safe in the keeping of God. But to the sincere enquirer we would say, *dwell not with thy doubts, but with thy convictions.* Prove the Truth for thyself. Put it to the test not so much by *arguing* as by *acting upon it.* Where Christ presides, idle speculation is hushed; His doctrine is learned in the doing of His will, and all knowledge ripens into a deeper and richer experience of His love."

We think this advice to put the truth to the test, not so much by *arguing*, as by *acting* upon it, is the only answer of any value we can give the sceptic to-day. No amount of logic, no strength of argument, or width of knowledge, can ever reach the sphere of experience. No amount of outside proof as to the date or authorship of the Bible can vouch for its internal Inspiration, nor can any criticism disprove that Inspiration, by destroying its present form or arrangement. *The letter is a passing manifestation only, the spirit is eternal.* And this spirit is only recognized by the witness of truth in the soul of the student. As he acts according to the commands of the Divine Volume, so he gradually realizes its truth and harmony with his own highest possibilities of life and work. In order to be guided one must seek guidance, not scornfully turn away thinking, if the guide is Divine, He will guide me whether

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I seek Him or no! That is not God's way: He says, "*ask* and ye shall receive, *knock* and it shall be opened to you." And the proof is ready to the hand of each. Let him seek to *love* his neighbour, in the sense of helping him, being just and merciful, and entirely truthful to him, and in this very strife he will find the Hand of God; he will realize a helpful Presence which, when his nature prompts, as it is sure to do, ease to self, urges in the opposite direction, suggests various kind words and deeds for the neighbour, and lo! he finds himself following in the footsteps of Christ, treading the path marked out by the Son of God, which must lead sooner or later to the Father in Heaven.

This feeling, that the *life* is the one test of the doctrine, has always been at the root of Friends' teaching. They have always clearly recognized that God being *Love Itself*, no simplest act or thought springing from Love, but must lead back to its Source. Therefore all individual views of doctrine, compatible with purity and holiness, have been permitted, and the glorious liberty of the Gospel, which allowed free scope for the peculiar development of their natures to Jews, and Gentiles, Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians, bond and free, has always been upheld by true Friends, and this strong feeling has probably greatly influenced their views on the ministry, the equal service of men and women, and the peculiar sacredness of marriage. No human preparation, no earthly learning, no self-imposed discipline, can prepare a man not anointed by the Spirit for acceptable service in the ministry. Our "Book of Discipline" says, "All true ministry of the Gospel is from the appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is He Who, by His Spirit, prepares and qualifies for the work. . . Gifts, precious as they may be, must not be mistaken for grace. . . It is the prerogative of Christ Jesus our Lord to choose and put forth His own ministers. . . We thankfully believe that, from the early rise of our Society, the Lord has been pleased to bestow this gift

77.3.

upon servants and upon hand-maidens without respect of persons. As a holy care prevails to move only under the leadings of the Spirit of Truth, unexcited by the activity and affection of the natural man, it will contribute to the edification of the body in love. . . Be cautious not to move in acts of devotion in your own will: set not self to work, but patiently attend and wait for the gift and enlivening power of the Divine Spirit. . . Let self be laid low, and your will be given up to the Lord. Move only as He calls you, and be very watchful to know both the outflowing and the staying of the anointing oil. . ." Faithfulness to the measure of light given is the only preparation needful, and "whether it be in the family or in the shop, in the market, the bank, or the board-room,—in those things which belong to your private or to your public duties, *let the light of the Gospel shine through all.* The parent, the master, the man of business, the citizen, the servant, each has a testimony to bear for Christ. . . And may none, whatever their position, overlook the lesser openings of duty. A word of counsel, of reproof, or of encouragement, spoken in season, in ever so broken a manner, whether in the family and social circle, or more publicly, how good it is! Each may be called to manifest his interest, by word or deed, on behalf of a brother or a sister, and thus to follow in the footsteps of our Divine Master, Whose whole life was marked by sympathy for the sorrows and infirmities of man. . . In all your pursuits and engagements keep within the restraints of a tender and enlightened conscience."

All this wise and tender counsel is addressed equally to men and women in the ministry. The perfect equality of the sexes having been made the subject of several of George Fox's epistles, and everywhere strongly insisted upon by him and the early Friends, owes nothing of its present recognition in the Society to the modern agitation for Women's Rights, and this realization of the claim of

women to equality in divine service and daily life, which was so novel an opinion in the 17th century, gave, in great measure, that peculiar sense of sacredness to marriage which Friends have always professed. "*We* marry none but are *witnesses* of it . . marriage is God's joining not man's." George Fox in his Canons, and in organizing the various meetings for conducting the business of the Society, is most careful to lay down strict rules for the utmost gravity, care, and publicity being given, as to the clearness from other engagements of the person seeking marriage, that due and ample notice had been given beforehand, numerous witnesses collected, and all things accurately entered in the Books of the Meeting kept for that purpose. He denounces in the strongest way any kind of courtship which does not sincerely intend marriage, either men or women who "draw out the affections of one another, and after awhile leave one another," and any conduct which tends to lower that ideal of marriage wherein the man and woman walking through life hand-in-hand are true help-meets: she inspiring him in all holiness and purity, he strengthening her in all service, until, like the Cherubim whose faces were turned to each other, yearning across the Mercy-seat for that full union their outspread wings typified, they realize that the eternal marriage, the full fruition of their nature, is only attained through Him Who dwells between the Cherubim, and Who in the beginning created *one* perfect creature in His own likeness.

"Marriage," says the "Book of Discipline," implies union and concurrence as well in spiritual as in temporal concerns. Whilst the parties differ in religious views, they stand disunited on the main point: even that which should increase and confirm their mutual happiness, and render them helps and blessings to each other. . . . Marriage is not a mere civil contract, but a religious act; it is God's ordinance and not man's. . . This Meeting is impressed with a sense of the vast influence, either for

good or evil, which marriage exercises on both the temporal and spiritual condition of man, and earnestly desires that, in the choice of a companion for life, all may seek unto the Lord for His guidance. . ." "Be kind and tender-hearted one to another, and earnestly labour for universal love, union, and peace. From love to Christ arises that stream of love to the brotherhood which, if suffered to flow in our hearts with unobstructed course, would bear away all malice and guile, and cause all complaints of tale-bearing and detraction to cease in our borders. . ." "Ye are called to love. O that the smallest germ of enmity might be eradicated from our enclosure! And verily there is a soil in which it cannot live, but naturally withers and dies. This soil is Christian humility. To be 'made perfect in love' is a high state of Christian excellence, and not attainable but by the sacrifice of selfish passions. Let Friends be prompt in undertaking, and prudent in executing the blessed office of peacemaker. . . Put the best construction upon the conduct and opinions one of another which circumstances will warrant. . . He who yields to a suspicious and unforgiving spirit is led on to imagine things against his brother that are exaggerated, or even false. . . The deepest experience in the things of God is that which brings into and preserves in the deepest humility and the most fervent love. . . There is hardly anything more inimical to the growth of vital religion than indulgence in the spirit of religious controversy. . . Under the abiding presence of His Spirit, individual subjection to Christ becomes the highest joy; and in this subjection His disciples are clothed with humility, forbearing one another in love. It is here alone that the true liberty is to be found; a liberty not to please ourselves, but in all things to please Him."

We have quoted so largely from these paragraphs on "Worship," and "Ministry," that we can only briefly notice the remaining counsels, which deserve a chapter to

themselves. "Beloved youth, guard in an especial manner against the *first* sacrifice of duty to inclination." "Consult not how far you may safely indulge yourselves, or how nearly you may approximate to the ways and habits of the world. . . In the service of Christ you will find abundant scope for the right employment of every talent." "Keep within the restraints of God's Spirit in your outward engagements, and even in pursuing the higher gratifications of intellect or taste. Seek not how nearly you can approach the world; how much of its care, its business, or its enjoyments you can partake of, without the loss of heaven; but rather how closely you can follow Christ in the obedience of faith."

The counsels on simplicity and moderation in "language, habit, deportment, and behaviour;" the warnings against luxury, display, and self-indulgence in any form; against the use of intoxicating liquors, indulgence in gambling, racing, theatres, balls, what is falsely called "sport," etc., etc., deserve quoting in full. These counsels *forbid* nothing, but appeal to Friends' higher natures to examine whether they are doing everything in their power to follow Christ, and to deny themselves for the sake of their weaker brethren. They are thus calculated to nourish that independent freedom of character which is obedient to the lightest touch of the hand of God on the spirit, and submissive to the laws of man in all things relating to the body, but which, once having seen the light on any subject, prefers ruin in earthly matters, or even death, to disobedience to the prompting of the inward guide.

Strict honesty and integrity in all business transactions have always distinguished Friends, and the strongest counsels are given against "trading beyond their ability," and "stretching beyond their compass." Against using many words in their dealings, and not keeping scrupulously to their word once it is given. They are specially required to pay their debts without delay, and to avoid contracting

extravagant ones. They are warned against too great eagerness to grow rich by engaging in speculation, and above all things to be upon the watch to know the right time for retiring from business, and to allow themselves "no indulgence, whether in your habits or pursuits, in your readings, companionships or recreations, that shall grieve the Holy Spirit, or upon which you cannot ask your Heavenly Father's blessing." One paragraph we *must* quote, because it expresses in concrete form the whole abstract idea of duty held on all subjects by the Society. It is a counsel addressed to Insolvents: "If any fall short of paying their just debts, and a composition be made with their creditors to accept of a part instead of the whole, that, *notwithstanding the parties may be legally discharged of any obligation to pay the remainder, yet the principle of universal righteousness* enjoins full satisfaction to be made, if ever the debtors are of ability. And in order that such may the better retrieve their circumstances, we exhort them to submit to a manner of living in every respect the most conducive to this purpose." It is this "principle of universal righteousness" *in all things*, this spiritual standard applied to practical details, which the "Book of Discipline" teaches from beginning to end. Whether in treating of worship, prayer, marriage, business or the making of wills and undertaking of trusts. . . Friends are "weightily recommended" to make their wills in time of health, since, as the advice on this subject quaintly says, "Making wills in due time can shorten no man's days, but the omission or delay thereof has proved very injurious to many." The advice to emigrants is another weighty comment on obeying the "principle of righteousness." Friends are implored to make their *lives* teach their religion to the defenceless natives, that none, however weak or barbarous, may suffer through their presence, and that strict justice, tempered by love and mercy, may guide them in all their transactions with savage races.

The Quaker testimonies against war, and slavery, are so universally known that we need not pause to quote the advices on these subjects, and their protests against mourning habits, the superstitious observance of days, the erection of monuments over graves, etc., are more the natural outcome of their purely spiritual view of Christ's teaching, and their strong desire to be absolutely true in deed and appearance, as well as in word and thought, than of any insuperable objection to these things in themselves. The more important subjects of "liberty of conscience," and "Christian life in relation to civil government," we shall touch upon in our final chapter, but we think that anyone who has followed our quotations (necessarily much abridged) from the "Book of Discipline," and will refer to that volume for themselves, will recognize that if, not a few thousands of earnest men and women only, but all our English millions followed the "principle of righteousness" in all things, as it is found inculcated there,— drew themselves apart in the dawning light which "*lighteth every man*," until it shone on each one's divinely appointed path, and then steadfastly strove to follow that path, devout persons of every church would need no longer to pray "Thy Kingdom come," for it would be shining in our midst, and undevout persons would dare no longer to scoff, "the churches have killed their Christ," for He would be the Light and Joy thereof, the risen Saviour crowned with everlasting life, reigning before their astonished eyes!

Nor would those Seekers of to-day — the socialists, scientists, democrats, poets, etc., who neither pray nor scoff, but yearn and hunger for some "divine word;" and wait for some angel or apostle able to give a sign of his mission, that they may hearken and act, striving faithfully meanwhile to win comfort, and healing, and salvation for the ills of humanity, by earnest toil and self-sacrifice—need any longer to build imaginary cities of refuge for wounded souls: for the "Principle of righteous-

ness," the "Inner Light," which our "Book of Discipline" sets forth above all spiritual heights, and beyond all material depths,—the "Christ in us," needs only to be followed individually, to reign universally, and to show forth the eternal truth, "the kingdom of God is within you!"

CHAPTER IV.

FIVE WITNESSES FROM WITHOUT.

WE have all probably, at some period of hope or fear in our lives, watched the dawn of a summer sunrise, an unspoken prayer upon our lips, a voiceless yearning toward the gleaming peaks of heaven, and the God Who is the Light of Paradise, in our souls. The dimness of the star-strewn night around us, the fragrance of the glimmering flowers, and softly luminous grasses at our feet, and the silence of the shadow-time ready, like an Æolian harp, to break into singing at the faintest touch, filling us with a breathless wonder, a stretching out into that spiritual life we apprehend clearly in that moment of mystery, beyond the golden gates of the sunrise, beyond the cool blue-grey circle of the sky, beyond the reach of the seeking senses, and yet a veritable reality.

We stand waiting in breathless awe at such moments. The Father of Spirits overshadowing us, and breathing into us His mighty Inspiration, and then, like a farewell note of music, like a bodiless messenger bidding us follow the guidance of that divine Breath, comes the first desultory breeze of a new day, and the pearl-like grey of the sky bursts aflower with the roses and golden lilies of morning. The slender golden heralds of dawn flit and fly, opening the gates of dimness and shadow, and lo! before our dreaming eyes blossoms the garden of God, and the silence grows swiftly lyrical, with the thrill and twitter of the awakened birds!

And it is with a feeling akin to this, that, looking backwards through the centuries, we watch the gradual dawn of the Christian sunrise through the star-strewn dimness of Greek and Hebrew foreshadowings. The gradual waxing of the Light of Christ, and the awakening of those

singing birds, the poets and seers of the new day, the wonderful day of God! We watch its birth, and slow growth, while the chorus of singers grows ever clearer, and more triumphant, but who shall see its close, when through the flaming bars of the last sunset, the holy city, white, and pure, and still, suffused with the Light of the Lord, sails into sight before our yearning eyes, and through the bitter sea of human tears mankind has reached the haven where he would be, and is satisfied to awaken with the divine likeness restored to him.

Plato and Æschylus are perhaps the most typical Greek heralds of Christ, representing as they do the Greek mind in its highest and most earnest strife to solve the problems of life nobly and righteously. To harmonise faith in the unseen with perfect enjoyment and appreciation of the seen, and to teach men so to live *here* in the sunlight, that they can face the darkness beyond the gates of *death* with a sweet serenity, and if with no actual hope, yet with no tragic fear.

"Platonism," says Pater, "is in one sense an emphatic witness to the unseen, the transcendental, the not-experienced—the beauty, for instance, which is not for the bodily eye." "Plato was a lover of the invisible."

What a phrase that is, when we remember the invisible God, Who should manifest Himself in Jesus! Plato looked at everything, at truth, at knowledge, at beauty, as at a person; and just because he was "a lover of the invisible," all fair forms, and lovely sounds, and noble thought, appealed the more intensely to his nature as manifesting the perfection of a *person* beyond their own visible charm. He was always the *lover*, and touched everything, as we instinctively feel, with the reverence of love. He realized, with that Greek brightness and sanity of spirit wanting in the Jew, the lesson Peter had to be taught, that *nothing* is common or unclean unless made so by unclean uses, and that to the pure-hearted, who alone can see God, all things are pure.

When we remember that the highest revelation of God to John was that He is *Love*, we perceive more clearly what a true herald the Greek Philosopher was to the universal Deity, and we recognize that the ladder of love, so beautifully described in the Symposium, was one Plato had himself climbed—was one God had let down from heaven to the Greek, as to the Hebrew, and was but the rendering in the language of poetry and philosophy of John's query, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Westcott says the myths of Plato foreshadow the revelation of John, and the Divine Word, for which he longed, was realized in the Divine Word Incarnate in Jesus. They are "venturous essays after truth, embodiments of definite instincts, sensible representations of universal human thoughts, confessions of weakness, it may be, but no less bold claims to an inherent communion with a divine and supersensuous world." And we shall find this passage fully borne out if we for a moment glance at one or two of these myths, bearing in mind that their author was always "a lover of the invisible," and recognized the spiritual nature of all truth behind every material manifestation.

His account of the soul in its chariot, always striving to follow the gods to the plain of truth, whereon grows the precious herb which nourishes its wings, and without which they cannot grow strong enough to bear it above the earth. And the account of the judgment after death, when the soul, despoiled of all its earthly trappings—no longer a king, philosopher or poet, but simply a naked shivering soul, wounded, leprous and loathsome, or fair, pure and holy, according to the life it has led in the flesh—is judged worthy of the Islands of the Blest, or the tortures of Tartarus; or worse fate still, is sentenced to be hung up in the dungeons as a terrible and eternal example, having entirely lost its wings, and being, therefore, incapable of healing and salvation either in this or

any other world, are indeed "venturous essays after truth," and the myths about the homes of the blessed dead, and the soul's choice of a lot in life are "bold claims to an inherent communion with a divine and supersensuous world."

The teaching of Plato must always appeal very strongly to Friends, as uniting with the Greek sense of the dignity of the body, and the beauty of wise restraint for noble uses, the Hebrew apprehension of the essentially spiritual nature of all life and material manifestations. While, when we turn to the earlier Greek herald, Æschylus, we find in the poet, even more strongly than in the philosopher, the sense that rightness of conduct is the only way of pleasing the gods. That by right use of the material we can apprehend the spiritual, and live calmly and grandly in its light, even although this light of the sun (Apollo) which the Greeks so revelled in, may not carry one beyond the grave. The Greek fully realized and understood the beauty and brightness of a righteous life, guided by Apollo and Athene, (inspiration and wisdom) balanced and restrained to all noble uses by the supreme Zeus; but it was left to the Christian to realize the peace and joy on the other side of death, as well as on this earth, and to comprehend the comfort of that Divine Word, on which, not as on a "raft," but, as borne on the wings of the soul he flies through the portals of the grave to the Paradise beyond, wherein Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, manifest at last in one God, Christ the All-in-All, waits to give them eternal life.

The character of Prometheus is the one by which Æschylus is most universally known, and Shelley has glorified the rebel as a martyr and saviour, although as Westcott points out "We forget" considering him in this aspect "That his sufferings were the consequence of an act of faithless distrust in Zeus, and of disobedience to his counsels....For the time he appears as a martyr; but he was first a rebel, and afterwards a pardoned subject,"

Prometheus seems a marvellous foreshadowing of the adversary, of Lucifer who was the morning star and glory of heaven, yet rebelled against the supreme God; who brought forbidden fruit of knowledge to men, and treacherously strove to mar the design of his Lord, by making His creatures equal to God's through sinful means ....who was cast out of heaven and stripped of his glory and joy....We stand on the edge of the Infinite here.... Prometheus was punished, purified, pardoned—the Greek ventured where the Christian scarcely dares to follow, and yet our God cannot be *All-in-All* while *one* spirit remains unpardoned, *one* speck of darkness dims the Eternal Light!

Æschylus gives us always, and everywhere, a noble portrait of Zeus, the supreme God, the *Divine Will*, who *wills* salvation to all, even in the end to the rebel Prometheus; while Apollo the Light-Bringer, and Pallas the feminine manifestation of Wisdom and Tenderness, are depicted as showing the action of Zeus in the world, the wise and tender life enlightened by inspiration, which will reach communion with his spirit. Can we not recognize here one of the stars heralding the sunrise of Christ's birth, an intuition of the dual nature revealed in the Saviour?

Much has been written and spoken of late years about the plural nature of God, wrongly translated in the singular in Genesis, and the dual nature of Jesus, whereby the New Adam, uniting in Himself man and woman, exerts an equal attraction on each, draws an irresistible love from each, and shows forth the first fruits of the restored divine creation, transformed once again into the likeness of God, wherein the blessedness of union between divine and human is made manifest.

The Roman Catholic Church has always recognized the necessity and claim of womanhood to form part of God, and has striven in her material fashion to realize this claim in the Virgin Mary, and the innumerable saints, who form various facets, as it were, of the perfect nature of the

Deity. Her doctrine of the real presence, too, is another dim and materialized apprehension of a divine fact, and Friends must always feel more sympathy with this groping after some of the deepest truths it has been their mission to teach, than with the scornful denial of these truths by the Protestant sister churches.

What *she* saw and strove materially to make apparent it has been *their* part to manifest spiritually. *She* sought communion with God by leaving the world and sacrificing its pleasures and advantages to a drowsy performance of self-set penances, *they* by conquering the worldly spirit in their own hearts, and making every duty of daily life an unspoken prayer. *She* set saints as examples, and guides, and helpers, round each of her children. *They* followed the Light of Christ as their guide, and believed with Beaumont and Fletcher:

> "Our *acts* our angels are, or good or ill,
> Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

She saw truth through a Pagan veil of the many, *they* found it in the Eternal Two-in-One of Christ. . .

Our Greek heralds have led us far, let us hear what Ruskin and Browning, who may perhaps be considered the two greatest spiritual teachers of our own day, in art and poetry, have to say to us, and then finally we will listen to the voice of one greater in some senses than either of them, inasmuch as he is a more perfect channel for the Breath of God, and does not speak tentatively as a teacher under correction, but directly as delivering his Lord's message. These three modern witnesses, like the Greek ones, will show the essential harmony of Friends' teaching with the deepest truth evolved by the artist, the poet, and the seer, each in his different fashion, from the Gospel of Christ, and will testify to the universal character of our principles from the mouths of those outside our apparent borders.

"My endeavour," says Ruskin, "has been uniformly to make them trust it (the Bible) more deeply than they do;

trust it, not in their favourite verses only, but in the sum of all; trust it, not as a fetish, or talisman, which they are to be saved by daily repetition of; but as a Captain's order, to be heard and obeyed at their peril...." "There is not one person in a million who knows what a 'million' means; and that is one reason the nation is always ready to let its ministers spend a million or two in cannon, if they can show they have saved twopence halfpenny in tape...." "The practical fact which will remain for the contemplation of the future, is that we have lost the art of painting on glass, and invented gun cotton and nitro-glycerine. . ." "Our great English games, hunting and shooting, are costly altogether; and how much we are fined for them annually in land, horses, gamekeepers, and game laws, and the resultant demoralization of ourselves, our children, and our retainers, I will not endeavour to count now; but note only that, except for exercise, this is not merely a useless game, but a deadly one to all engaged in it. For through horse-racing you get every form of what the higher classes everywhere call 'Play,' in distinction from all other plays: that is gambling; and through game-preserving you get also some curious laying out of ground: that beautiful arrangement of dwelling-house for man and beast, by which we have grouse and blackcock—so many brace to the acre, and men and women—so many brace to the garret. I often wonder what the angelic builders and surveyors—the angelic builders who build the 'many mansions' up above there; and the angelic surveyors who measured that four-square city with their measuring reeds—I wonder what they think, or are supposed to think, of the laying out of ground by this nation. . . ." "If you choose to obey your Bibles, you will never care who attacks them. It is just because you never fulfill a downright precept of the Book, that you are so careful for its credit; and just because you don't care to obey its whole words, that you are so particular about the letters of them. The Bible tells you to dress plainly,—and you are mad for

finery; the Bible tells you to have pity on the poor,—and you crush them under your carriage-wheels; the Bible tells you to do judgment and justice,—and you do not know, nor care to know, so much as what the Bible Word 'justice' means. Do but learn so much of God's truth as that comes to; know what He means when He tells you to be just; and teach your sons that their bravery is but a fool's boast, and their deeds but a firebrand tossing, unless they are indeed Just men, and Perfect in the Fear of God:— *And you will soon have no more war. . .*" "This idol (riches) forbidden to us, first of all idols by our own Master and faith; forbidden to us also by every human lip that has ever, in any age or people, been accounted of as able to speak according to the purposes of God. Continue to make that forbidden deity your principal one, and soon no more art, no more science, no more pleasure will be possible. Catastrophe will come, or worse than catastrophe, slow mouldering and withering into Hades. But if you can fix some conception of a true human state of life to be striven for—life, good for all men, as for ourselves; if you can determine some honest and simple order of existence; following those trodden ways of wisdom, which are pleasantness, and seeking her quiet and withdrawn paths, which are peace;—thus, and so *sanctifying wealth into 'commonwealth,'* all your art, your literature, your daily labours, your domestic affection, and citizen's duty, will join and increase into one magnificent harmony. . ."

"There is no true potency, remember, but that of help; nor true ambition but ambition to save. . ." "Make your national conscience clean and your national eyes will soon be clear. . ." "It was the selling of absolution that ended the mediæval faith;—it is the selling of absolution which, to the end of time, will mark false Christianity. Pure Christianity gives her remission of sins only by *ending* them, but false Christianity gets her remission of sins by *compounding* for them. . ." "You have all got into the habit of calling the church 'the

house of God.' I have seen over the doors of many churches this legend actually carved, '*This* is the house of God and this is the gate of heaven.' . . ." Ruskin then, in a passage too long for quotation, describes the place where these words were first spoken, and continues: "This *place*, observe, not this church, not this city, not this stone even, which he puts up for a memorial. . . But this place; . . this *any* place where God lets down the ladder. And how are you to know where that will be? or how are you to determine where it may be, but by being ready for it always. . . You can guide the lightning, but you cannot guide the going forth of the Spirit, which is as the lightning when it shines from the east and the west. . . Unless we perform Divine service in every willing act of life, we never perform it at all. . ." "Sight is an absolutely spiritual phenomenon; . . and the 'Let there be Light,' is as much when you understand it the ordering of intelligence as the ordering of vision. . . What we are to pray for is the Light of the world; nay, the Light that lighteth *every man that cometh into the world.* To the Persian, the Greek, and the Christian, the sense of the power of the God of Light has been one and the same. . . That power is not merely in teaching or protecting, but in the enforcement of purity of body and of equity or justice in the heart. And this observe, not heavenly purity nor final justice, but now, and here, actual purity in the midst of the world's foulness; practical justice in the midst of the world's iniquity. 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the *Lord and Giver of Life!*' you say in your creed. . . let me very strongly recommend you not to seek your amusements in the destruction of animals, nor your national safety in the destruction of men. . . ." "Have you ever thought seriously of the meaning of that blessing given to the peacemakers? People are always expecting to get peace in heaven, but you know whatever peace they get there will be ready-made. Whatever making of peace *they* can be blessed for must be on the earth here: not the

taking of arms against, but the building of nests amidst its 'sea of troubles.'"

We have quoted almost at random from the two first books of Ruskin's we took up, but anyone who cares to go further in the study of his writings, or anyone who has already studied him (and who has not?) will be able to find, or recall, hundreds of other passages equally true, equally beautiful, equally full of the essential teaching of Quakerism. With one final quotation on the duty of literature, a passage worthy to rank with Milton's celebrated utterance on the same subject, we will leave our artist and turn to our poet. "Literature does its duty," says Ruskin, "not in wasting our hours in political discussion, or in idle fiction; but in raising our fancy to the height of what may be noble, honest, and felicitous in actual life;— in giving us, though we may ourselves be poor and unknown, the companionship of the wisest fellow-spirits of every age and country, and in aiding the communication of clear thoughts and faithful purposes among distant nations, which will at last breathe calm upon the sea of lawless passion, and change into such halcyon days the winter of the world, that the birds of the air may have their nests in peace, and the Son of Man where to lay His head."

There are two distinct lines of thought in Browning's poetry. The perpetual questioning "What will God say?" and the equally constant assertion that earth educates for heaven, and that we are ourselves building up our own future condition, either in listening to what God says to us by His voice in our spirits, and thus co-operating with Him in blessed communion, or in disregarding the Light, in choking the holy seed, and in his own words:

> "The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
> Is the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin."

Life is a ladder, he teaches, and every deed nobly done, every work sincerely toiled at, every duty fulfilled honestly, with all our strength and energy, lifts us a step higher,

brings us nearer that perfection of loving service which is his idea of heaven. "No work begun shall ever pause for death."

"Life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear,—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is."

"What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
. . . . . .
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.
. . . . . .
But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's account.

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God.
. . . . . .
. . All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure."

The forsaken lover, noble in his sorrow, as Browning's lovers always are, says:

Yes, might I judge you, here were my heart,
And a hundred its like to treat as you pleased!
I choose to be yours, for my proper part,
Yours, leave me or take, or mar or make;

If I acquiesce, why should you be teased
With the conscience-prick and the memory-smart?
But what will God say? Oh! my Sweet,
Think, and be sorry you did this thing!

He recognizes that her broken faith offends the faithfulness of God more than it wounds the lover, but the latter's bitterness breaks out at last at the treason which has slain love even in the truest human heart, yet never in the divine heart of the Saviour:

"I knew you once, but in Paradise,
If we meet, I will pass nor turn my face."

It is Browning's intense recognition of the inevitableness of earthly action that in "Porphyria's Lover" leads the man to kill the woman he loves, while he knows she is perfectly pure and true, rather than see her fall into sin, and his feeling that he was right is shown in the hurt astonishment of the last line,

"And yet God has not said a word!"

Browning's constant iteration of the query, "Is there no forcing earth to teach heaven's employ?" reminds us of George Fox's iteration, "Let your lives preach." And his recognition that Love is the true teacher, the image of God, is shown in almost every poem he has ever written. The marvellous scene in the "Ring and the Book," where Guido, at the very last moment, sees in a time-flash Pompilia's true nature, and despairing of every other power, divine or human, calls on her,

"Pompilia, will you let them murder me?"

recognizing that love alone "never faileth," is perhaps the most striking example of this, but we might quote at random from almost any page of his writings:

"For all love greatens and glorifies,
Till God's aglow, to the loving eyes,
In what was mere earth before.

. . . . . .

I end with, Love is all, and death is nought, quoth she!

Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be true.
And love's the truth of mine.
I count life just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.
. . . . . .
Things learned on earth we shall practise in heaven.
. . . . . .
The gain of earth must be heaven's gain too.
. . . . . .
God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:
I claim you still for my own love's sake!"

But in dwelling on this love, we must remember it is the love Plato teaches as leading through the visible object to the invisible deity. The love Æschylus teaches as guiding to the home of the gods. And the love Paul teaches as greater than aught else in the world, because purer and more Christlike. The Greeks did well to distinguish between the two Aphrodites, the one who was the holy light of the home, and guide to the temples of the gods, the other who led men into the swamps of unholy desires and base passions, and left them a prey to the Erinnyes or guilt-avengers.

Why, where's the need of Temple, when the walls
O' the world are that? What use of swells and falls
From Levite's choir, Priest's cries, and trumpet calls?
That one face, far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Become my universe that feels and knows!

Our quotations are necessarily fragmentary and imperfect, but even from these fragments we can perceive the harmony of this great poet's view of life and the world, with that always put forward by Friends, *i.e.* that light is given to every man sufficient for his safe guidance through the duties and temptations of life, if faithfully followed, and that this light grows clearer and brighter with every step, and leads us by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit into purity and peace, *here and now*, until the new

creature, *Christ in us*, lives in very truth in a *new earth* and realizes a *new heaven*.—That the great and only needful question for us to ask is, "But what will God say?" heedless of the opinions or traditions of men; and the one and only cause for doubt and despair is, "And yet God has not said a word!" That the whole world is a temple wherein we worship the Father of Spirits, and that the truest prayers and worthiest praises are deeds of love, and mercy, and help, to all in need, or sorrow, or sin.— That death is merely an open door for us to enter joyfully, and find higher service, purer love, clearer inspiration in the greater nearness to God the life beyond will allow.

In turning to our last witness, let us pause one moment to let Browning speak his own character and epitaph.

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

Noble lines for a poet's farewell to the world, but not nobler than the life which made it possible for him to write them, and for us to recognize their absolute truth as applied to himself.

Alas that they *are* his epitaph! But there still stands in our midst John Pulsford, the poet-seer, who seems to us to be the most Christ-like teacher, the most open channel for inspiration, that our century has known. We say *Christ-like* advisedly, for his teaching is on no sectarian lines, no narrow national or personal bias can ever be detected in it. It is like His Master's, universal as the ether, which surrounds and penetrates so softly and gently, we are unaware of its presence, and only recognize its pure beneficence by the fruits it produces. Pulsford, like Ruskin and Browning, after being ignored and scorned by the many, is gradually growing to be recognized for what he is. His crown-time is swiftly drawing near. But although in the hearts of all those heralds of the dawn

who are scattered abroad throughout all lands to-day, his name and his teaching are enshrined, yet he is still so imperfectly known to those who still

> Cull simples,
> With a broad clown's back turned broadly to the glory of the stars.

that we wish to quote at some length from his latest book, *Loyalty to Christ.*

He says in the preface to this book, speaking of Christ's teaching: "The pulse of the Divine Law, Living Universal Law, throbs in His sayings, and appeals directly to the intuitions of the soul." And he is such a perfect transmitter of this divine message, that these words may fitly be applied also to his own teaching. "The Christ of God is in the air that men breathe, and in stillness and silence, He will prevail over the uproar of His enemies. To kill Him, as a visible Presence, will only increase tenfold His actual Presence. . . ." "Forget not, that the midnight of human experience is the hour of the new birth. . . ." "Making a Highway *for God* in man is clearly the making of the man. . . ." This is the groundwork of Pulsford's teaching,—to awaken men and women, to open every window and door of their sleeping natures, until they realize the perpetual presence of Christ, the Light of the World, and His breath has made a highway for the divine to pass into the human. Is not this our old lesson, "I charge you all in the presence of the living God *to dwell in the Light*, that ye may be made manifest to the Light in all consciences, to the measure of God, which is pure, which is given to everyone."—The first lesson George Fox taught to his followers more than two hundred years ago, yet palpitating with the spirit and life of the coming century?

"The aim of every genuine teacher is to enable his disciples to do without him. Whoever desires to exercise priestly authority over men and women, or to hold them in subjection to himself or to his church, is a usurper and a stumbling block in the way of their progress. . . ."

"We must never suppose that our Father's Love can be shut up in any terms with which we are acquainted, nor in any Scriptures that we have received, nor in any creed which we may hold. . ." "Let our religion be a life of daily Love: let it be Humanity's Love to humanity, not Love with qualifications and under certain limitations, but Love without limits,—Love not to good men and women only, but Love to the worst possible men and women. . ." "Christianity includes every human good, both for the individual and the whole world. It is anti-war, anti-taxation, anti-oppression, anti-selfishness. It is good-will between man and man all the world over. . ." "Let us learn that God's love to us always involves judgment on our old nature and our old ways. . ." "Nothing so vitalizes and uplifts the inner man as working for God, and with God, in blessing others. . ." "The spirit of love and sincerity, with whatever forms it may be clothed, reaches God. . ." "What men call vices are not the only sins, nor the worst sins. Coldness of heart towards God, and coldness of heart towards men are the two great sins. Nothing short of the Spirit of Love is Righteousness before God. Every man *owes* God love, and he owes the same to his fellow-man. Love is God's Life; and it is our life. . ." "Nothing could *fill* the human soul but Love, and the Joy of Love. . . There is no rest like Love's rest in doing good. Love's satisfaction is God's peace, and His children's peace. He and they have but one desire, namely, to fill the world with peace, by leading the Spirit of Love into every human breast. . . Love does no evil to anyone: therefore Love is the fulfilling of the universal Law which binds God to all men, and men to one another. Give out, uncalculatingly, the Spirit of Love, hoping for nothing again, and whatever of worldly substance you lose, you shall be the children of the Highest. . . Human law can never make it right to do what perfect Love would not, and could not do. . ."

The sweet iteration of "Love" and "Love's way," sings through everything Pulsford has written, like a little river through a flowerful land, and recalls George Fox's constant prayer through all his epistles, "do everything in love." We would fain linger, and continue to quote the beautiful variations on the one supreme theme, which read like a fourth of John's Epistles in the language of to-day, but we must pass to Pulsford's utterances on the practical testimonies of Friends, or rather the passages in which he has expressed his deepest thoughts and convictions with regard to absolute truth, and which having no intentional bearing on our views, are therefore the stronger evidence in our favour.

We have always insisted, as mentioned before, on the spiritual and general interpretation of the Bible as opposed to selected texts, and verbal inspiration. Pulsford says "There is a wise jealousy of texts, which is highly favourable and essential to a knowledge of the Truth. Texts are partial statements, which often lead the unwary to contradict other texts. You must strike the balance of all texts if you want to get at the Truth. But even that is not enough. Jesus made no mention of texts when He promised His disciples that they should know the Truth. Nothing short of the vital action of God's Spirit within the soul leads to the discovery of Truth. . ." "We should labour, therefore, to extricate our inner humanity from the oppressions, exactions, and temptations of the world's corrupt civilization, and hold it in clear relief as our true identity, capable of endless progress, and of being ultimately crowned with the perfectness of God. . ." "Better to do one year's work in the Spirit of God than sixty years' work as a monotonous tongue of tradition. . ." "If metaphysical minds are in danger of sacrificing the historical Christ in favour of the Divine Element, which is in all humanity, on the other hand Christian Believers are equally in danger of servility to the limits of old revelations, and to *the letter* of Scripture. Their incapacity

of receiving the instruction which all history supplies is very strange. . . The New Testament writers bid us look for richer and riper discoveries of Truth. Prior to leaving the world Christ declared that He had not revealed the full glory and unity of the Truth. . . The orthodox plan of salvation makes its appeal to self-love, and while stimulating the profoundest form of selfishness in its believers, flatters them that they are the special favourites of God. . . It is notorious that carnal men, whose souls are full of this world's ambitions, can very warmly contend for the orthodox belief. But when do we find such men pleading for the *interior new creation of the soul*, which is the process of Christ? How can persons, whose thoughts are under bondage to the literal meaning of words, ever find 'the Word of God' in the Scriptures? Never. . . The letter of Scripture is no more the 'Word of God' than the flesh of man is the man,—no more than the chaff which wraps up the wheat is the wheat. . . Not words, but souls, find God. . . True religion never was, and never can be, anything else than the life of God in the Soul of man. . . True religion is a life of freedom and simplicity, arising from the love of God in the heart, and manifested by doing good. By whomsoever the most good is done, by them the most Truth of God is lived. . . Here is a religion, which is not only a pure simplicity, but is absolutely above criticism. Nothing here depends on historical research, and nothing on the dates, nor on the authorship of certain books. Here is an infinitely-perfect, all-blessed affection, and this affection is God: 'God is Love.' And the same affection living and reigning in men and women makes them His children for ever. . ." "The Christianity of the churches has been dying for centuries because it stereotyped itself, and ceased to be *led* of the Spirit. Jesus said, 'The Spirit *shall lead you into all Truth;*' but believers in 'the oldness of the letter' said, No: we prefer a fixed sepulchral institution, honoured and supported by mammon,

learning, and dry statements. . . " " The only possible entrance to Divine illumination is through the strait gate of the new-birth. . . " " How we should pity men and women who are stranded on the shallow shoal of an inherited belief, and immovable ! and who have given up God's Infinite Truth for their traditions ! "

" We turn from the antiquated fabrications of men and set our face steadfastly towards another temple, not an artificial structure nor measurable,—broader than the earth, higher than the heavens, and *living* through God's influent Life. Christianity is declared to be '*the dispensation of the Spirit.*' And that gives us authority enough for repudiating the claims of the letter, the killing letter, with which zealots would fetter our souls. . . The everlasting Word, the exponent of the infinite Mind of God, is a new prophet, and has a new message, and a fuller statement for every new age. Christ calls us to vital present-day work, not to build the tombs and reiterate the words of men of other centuries. The past is ever a house of bondage, out of which the Spirit brings the children of every new age. Let us lean on present day inspiration....no Scriptures of the past, no tenets of your church will enable you to dispense with the inbreathing of God's fresh Life into your souls. . . Our duty and our privilege are to enquire what the *Spirit* meant, *not what the man meant.* . . The Inspiration of God is revealing *to us* more of what He means than ever was or ever could be revealed before. For it has taken all the past to liberate us, and educate us, sufficiently to be capable of the larger, sweeter, and more God-honouring thoughts which we are now receiving. . . "

We now pass to a few of his thoughts on democracy, the keeping of days, the ministry, war, sport, and direct guidance, and we shall see that if Friends have always felt and spoken strongly on these points, Pulsford speaks, if possible, more strongly than any Friend could do. He says :

1. *Democracy.*—"In nothing does Jesus resemble either the rulers in the church or in the state. . . He uniformly noticed and loved, helped and comforted those who receive no attention from the great personages of the world. . . For the cure of the wrongs, the suspicions, jealousies, and envyings of the nations, we must not look to emperors, kings, presidents, and governments. . . Our aim must be the unity of the race, the open and untrammelled intercourse of all nations, the peace and prosperity of all nations. With this purpose and end in view we should inaugurate centres of international brotherhood in every nation. . . ." Is not this precisely what George Fox and the early Friends strove to do, with their much travelling and constant correspondence all over the world?

"'I have compassion on the multitude,' must be translated in our day: My soul is moved towards the masses, the socialists, nihilists, communists and atheists, who see no government which they can respect, nor any order of society which they can believe to be well-pleasing to a God of love and goodness. . . We may regret their headstrong measures, and condemn them when they resort to violence; but it is by no means certain that if they and their rulers changed places that the latter would be less irritated, or less impatient. . . *The same Lord of Humanity .... is now contending in all nations throughout the world for the rights of the poor.* . . He lives and reigns for the 'common people,' and will reign for them until they see the salvation of God. . . Class after class excuses itself from uniting in the effort and labour of bringing about Divine order in the earth. Every movement that looks or leads in that direction is called democratic and revolutionary. Neither landowners nor professional men are prepared to enter into homely and familiar relationships with ploughmen, joiners, bricklayers, blacksmiths, etc. . . What liberty of soul, what geniality of friendship, and what openness of speech with each

other we shall enjoy when the individual man is warmly related to God, and all classes are interwedded in the bonds of one common humanity! When there are neither political cliques nor religious cliques, but under all the distinctions of genius and service men mutually love and honour one another.', . . " This ideal ought not to be difficult for Friends to reach, when we remember that their constitution, both religious and social, has always been based on purely democratic principles.

2. *On keeping of days.* "Is not the Divine Life in the soul the true Sabbath? What need has the Divine Life of any other temple than the human body? Pity the condition of men and women, so long as they need the periodical administration of external sacraments and solemnities. For days, times, written laws, and scriptures, as compared with the soul's nature, are mechanical and comparatively dead. To encourage either the last day of the week or the first day, to lord it over man, is an offence both to God and to humanity. . . Our great Teacher delivers us from days, and from every species of ritual, by breathing into our souls the Spirit of His Love, making us good men and women, neighbourly, and ready to render service to one another. His free Spirit is our Sabbath. Oh! if men and women, instead of being Sabbath-Pharisees, would only ray out the Love of God towards each other, they would be much more beautiful before Heaven, and make their fellow-creatures happier. Love would cure all the ills in the world. My Father is growing grass for the cattle, and ripening grain and fruits for the service of man, all the Sabbath-day. His tides flow, His winds blow, and the benign influences of His Spirit never suspend their operation. . . "

3. *The Ministry.* Salvation by a birth of Christ in the soul instead of salvation by a creed is God's method. . . True ministers of Christ are uplifters of the souls, and healers of the bodies of men, and not mere talkers. 'Preach! and heal!' says the Master, to the men whom

He sends forth. But with us, teachers and healers make two very distinct professions; and on that very account both are weak, and insufficiently related to the whole nature of man. . . Pharisees are a religious caste, and believe in ostentatious solemnities: Christ belongs to no caste, religious or other, He is Man! And by quietly and invisibly moving among men He impregnates them, until they aspire to a purer, nobler life; and before they are aware they are in the way which leadeth unto Life. . . No one should receive this hidden Life, this potential glory, and hold it unconfessed. If a man is not constrained to confess, and to bear his testimony concerning it, he is unworthy of it. If he has not power and life enough from Christ to constrain his tongue, he should have a timely fear that he has not enough to glorify and save him. . . "

The many quotations inculcating love to all nations, to all classes, and the utter inability of love to make war, or so to act that war becomes possible among the followers of the Prince of Peace, renders further dwelling on this point, or the kindred one of sport, unnecessary: with one plain thought on "sport" we will pass to *direct guidance*. "The crown of the merciful is, that there are no men nor women, whatever may be their sins or errors, who have any charge to make against them. Nor have the beasts, nor the birds, nor the insects any cruelties to plead against them. Some men have a fearful account to settle: for the pains and cries of the beasts are stored up in the spirit-world, and will confront them by-and-by in very unexpected forms of judgment."

4. *Direct Guidance.* "What light is to the eye the 'Spirit of Truth' is to the soul. . . It is the Christ-Life in man that opens Heaven, first of all *in* him, and afterwards *to* him. . . His desire to lead His Spirit into the inmost chamber and sanctuary of our being waits upon our desire for His Indwelling. . . The immanency of the Father-Spirit is the essential law and distinction of

man's personality. No man can deny that at times he is secretly reproved, made ashamed of himself, within the deep privacy of his breast. . . Clearly some Spirit wiser and better than himself is reasoning with him, and seeking to draw him out of his corrupt selfhood, that a nobler selfhood may be formed in him. . . Sometimes in the silence of the night, sometimes in pain, or following an accident, a man is compelled to recognize that the Divine Love is pleading with him, and drawing him. . . If we move under Divine Influence it is towards our true Home and its blessed friendships. . . When the life of men is strictly the Life of God in them, their daily thoughts and affections reach into Heaven and operate there. . . How may a man know whether he is inspired and led by Christ or by subtle spirits? Here is an infallible rule: the Presence of Christ in his soul will make his own nature, with its passions and propensities, a serious cross to him. . ." "Ethiopians, Hindoos, Mahomedans, Jews, and Christians will be judged without partiality. The Heathen who have obeyed a less light will rank with Jesus, before Christians who have resisted their clearer light. Africans will rise up in the judgment and condemn Englishmen; for many of them no sooner hear of God's Love in Christ than they become contrite and walk in newness of life, while many, many Englishmen who have long and often heard the same message, have hardened themselves in their selfhood. . . In thinking of 'the Kingdom of God' we should remember that there is no such thing as a Jewish God, nor a British God, nor an European God, nor a Popish God, nor a Protestant God, nor even a clerical God. There is one omnipresent and impartial Spirit, who is 'the Father of Spirits,' that is, the Father of the immortal humanity of the universe. . ."

We have thus seen by a brief examination of the thoughts of two ancient, and three modern, representative ethical teachers, the confirmation of the claim Friends have always advanced, that their message is no national or

sectarian one, but rather addressed to *all* nations.— That it is entirely spiritual, and yet intensely practical; insisting as it does on the necessity of truth being received by each individual, as a purely personal revelation to his or her spirit, not passed on from one to another as an intellectual opinion; and at the same time that Christianity is a *life* and not merely a *doctrine;* that Christ is the *Way* as well as the *Divine Word;* and that consequently the reign of peace and justice, for which all earnest men and women are striving under their various banners and watchwords, can only be attained by the 'new birth' in each individual, which developes the hidden family likeness to God.

We have seen also, that there is nothing in essential Quakerism which the Seekers of to-day— the Scientists, Socialists, and Agnostics, cannot receive, inasmuch as its teaching has never been petrified into a creed, but has always insisted that the one thing needful is to follow the little light that we have faithfully, until more is given; that the Eternal Truth reveals Himself in divers ways, and that the illuminated spirit and the enlightened mind go hand-in-hand. That to pin faith to the *letter* (apart from the Spirit) of a revelation, coming through a human, and therefore faulty medium, is "to set the Holy Ghost to school," and that the true "child of the Light," and "Friend of Truth," is he whose body, mind, and spirit are developed harmoniously and equally in a pure life, an active intellect, and an illuminated soul!

CHAPTER V.

THE MESSAGE TO-DAY.

IT is a significant fact that George Fox and William Penn are the only two Protestant Reformers placed by Comte in his Positivist Calendar of Great Men. The founder of the religion of humanity evidently recognized that the Society of Friends, however insignificant in numbers as compared with the other churches, contained a portion of that "leaven which leaveneth the whole," and delivered a message to the *human race* quite apart from any sect or nation.—That this message having a scope as universal as the Spirit of Truth Itself, has exerted a world-wide influence on humanity, and that, consequently, those men by whom it was first delivered deserve a distinct place amongst the saints and benefactors of mankind.

Quakerism has always claimed to represent the life and mind of Christ in each individual, and to teach what Jesus Himself taught, in the simplicity of the Gospel record, as distinguished from the traditions of men or the testimonies of the so-called "Fathers," whose teaching fairly interpreted, however, inculcates a very different Christianity from the Christianity of the churches in the 17th century, or even the 19th.

Its message, bearing the twofold character of intense spirituality in faith and worship, with an entirely practical basis of conduct and life, is therefore as true for the 20th century as it was for the 17th, although the details of its testimonies vary with the rise and fall of special wrongs and abuses.

For instance, that plainness and simplicity, springing from devotion to absolute truth in all things, which Friends have always inculcated, is shown to-day, not so much in protests against tithes, and titles, and bowing and hat-

lifting, as against drinking and gambling; against impurity of thought, as well as life and literature; against servility to position and wealth in our own borders; against the earthly spirit in *all* its modern developments; against commercial immorality, whether seen in bogus companies, false advertisements, or misleading reports; against formality, even the formality of our own formlessness; against the *letter* of our discipline, as well as the *letter* of Scripture; and against pandering to the democrat as well as pandering to the aristocrat. The spiritual side of the message we shall consider presently; meantime it is observable that Quakers are often attacked from the two opposite camps of revelation and reason. "You exalt the natural light of reason," say the bondmen of the letter, "above the revealed Word of God!" "You exalt mere emotional sentiment," say the prisoners of logic and positivism, "above the guiding light of reason given to men to preserve them from the lying visions of a disordered imagination, and the marvel-loving greediness of an imperfectly developed nature."

The "Friend of Truth" calmly smiles, the Bible in his hand, the Light of Christ in his soul, but the lantern of reason ever-present in his mind, to examine the fruits of his faith, *i.e.* the pure, true, honest, unselfish life *here*, making a constantly widening circle of peace and blessedness around him, and at the end the certain hope of a joyful hereafter in that "great love which is also a great peace."

This is the Quaker's Ideal: to dwell in the Light of Christ and follow in all things its guidance and leading, wherever and through whatever it may guide or lead. He sees always the rays from the Sun of Righteousness illuminating his own spirit, and gently revealing, step by step, the footprints of Christ across the world, in which he can tread, and by treading leave brighter and clearer for following feet; and beyond these footprints he sees shining far off and shadowy the holy city of God. This we say is the Quaker's Ideal, and although the real

often falls short of it, seeing it afar off, but coming not nigh, since we are human and not divine ; yet what a man *believes*, not merely accepts, but *believes*, in the sense of being ready to give up all earthly things, even life itself, rather than deny, shows the character of the type generated. And thus we maintain that no other teaching is so calculated to influence the Seekers of to-day as the simple faith of the children of the Light, with its appeal to every side of human nature, its universal tolerance, and openness to the reception of new light, from whatever source it may proceed, with its absolute insistense on the Divine Fatherhood, and human brotherhood, and the necessity of the personal communion of each individual spirit with the Father of Spirits. And above all with its demonstration of this communion in a perfectly pure, true, and peaceable life; in the education and care of the poorer brethren, and the loving help each Friend is expected to administer to all in need, not only in things spiritual, but also in things temporal, which often seems a far more difficult matter.

There are vast multitudes of Seekers to-day, as we all know only too well, hungering for a revelation of God—yearning for a guiding faith — "pushed mightily from within to know for themselves what ails human nature." Theosophists, sceptics, materialists, agnostics, positivists—waifs and strays drifted from all the churches because they have been given earthly stones when they asked for the Bread of Heaven.

These Seekers are waiting, like their namesakes in George Fox's days, for some angel or apostle able to give a sign of his mission, and it behoves every Quaker to uphold his ideal faith now as never before. To be a child of the Light, and a friend of Truth in very deed, abhorring equivocation as heartily as direct untruthfulness; hating all darkness, whether of absolute sin or unfair argument, and insisting on the entirely spiritual nature, and yet intensely practical character, of his views with no

uncertain voice. Making the *life* the test not the *doctrine*, and absolute purity, not only in deed, but in thought and word, whether in man or woman, the essential sign of faith. Protesting as much against the iniquitous traffic in drink and opium as against slavery; *that* enbondaged the body, but *these* enslave the soul as well. Making peace—*i.e.* the disarmament of the world, the spread of that sense of universal brotherhood which would make war and outrage impossible—his first aim and end. Striving and agitating for the complete emancipation of women,— the complete equality of the sexes,—until woman, free to develop her life, as man is free to develop his, can indeed set herself to him,

"Like perfect music unto noble words."

Visibly denouncing the commercial immorality, which to-day alas! has become so hydra-headed, so Protean-formed, by strict and unswerving obedience to the noble advices and queries of his Book of Discipline, which sets before him the noblest ideal of spiritual perfection and practical usefulness ever given to any church since the Master gave His two comprehensive commands, to love God and the neighbour. Denouncing, as he is bound to do by his principles, *all* gambling, whether on the Race-course or the Stock Exchange. Renouncing for himself, and protesting against in others, the cruelty to their helpless and innocent fellow-creatures, known sarcastically under the name of "Sport!" Striving in every way open to him, so to educate public honour and honesty, that it will seem as disgraceful to the ordinary man to tell a lie, not merely in actual words to his neighbour, but in issuing deluding advertisements, publishing or patronizing Society Journals, recommending fraudulent investments, bogus companies, or adulterated goods, as to cheat at cards. This last offence representing to the present ordinary Englishman, we imagine, the place where he draws a hard and fast line, never to be passed without his feeling himself eternally disgraced. All this it

behoves the true Friend to do, thus letting "his life preach" to the watching Seeker.

Many other wrongs waiting to be righted, many other sins waiting to be denounced, will at once occur to those who have imbibed the spirit of essential Quakerism. Friends might do more than they have done for instance in forming Boards of Arbitration *before* the grievances of masters and men have grown into strikes and lock-outs; although it is well-known how actively engaged many members of the Society have been already in this work: still these Boards of Arbitration require organizing for the different trades all over the country, and being so formed that both parties in any dispute would feel certain of scrupulous care in hearing their evidence, and justice in pronouncing judgment. In these days, also, when every penny-a-liner or notoriety-hunter flings his or her pebble of cheap abuse, or second-hand sarcasm, at the sacredness of the marriage-relation, Friends have a great duty to do in upholding the religious character of marriage. George Fox said, and Friends have always felt he said truly, "We marry none but are witnesses of marriage. . . ."

Such are a few of the subjects on which Quakerism may claim to speak to the 20th century more clearly than any other religious body, because its name already bears the grand distinction won for it by its founder and his followers, of representing truth, and honesty, and kindness, and benevolence.

To be a Quaker once meant,—and means even yet to the great majority of people who trouble themselves little about ideas or special views,— to be a man or woman peculiar, and somewhat strait-laced in appearance and manner, but who might be implicitly trusted. Whose calm "I intend doing so," is amply equivalent to an ordinary person's solemn oath, and though of course painful examples of different conduct will occur to everyone, yet Quakers, as a body, could never have won the name they have, without making perfect truth and strict honesty their rule in life.

The peculiarities may go—they are fast disappearing—the dress, the plain language, the too-restricted family or class feeling, the abstinence from all enjoyment of art, and a certain narrowness of view caused by the recoil from the unrestrained worldliness and saturnalia of jarring, hideous caricatures of religion, which Friends encountered at their first foundation. But the inner meaning of all this,—the simple dress that the wearer may have more time, and thought, and money, to give to others. The plain language, that the speaker may not be tempted to transgress or hurry beyond the exact limits of truth, by any exaggerated sentiment or violent passion of any kind. The strong family or class feeling, which signified in an age of persecution the brotherhood of all professing Truth beneath the Fatherhood of God, these will remain until essential Quakerism itself ceases to exist!

With regard to their stern renunciance of art, it was neither pure and noble art, nor true and earnest science, that Friends renounced in the past, and will renounce in the future. The spiritual side of their message leads them to value the first, and the practical side the second.

The art which they denounced was the art which had fallen from its high estate, and forgotten its divine mission to reveal the spiritual behind, and through the material, thus always leading thoughtful souls to remember the revelation of the Saviour through the human symbol. An art which had descended to a mere pagan worship of physical beauty, a mere pagan spirit of sensual gratification. An art which denied the Supreme Artist, and blasphemed the holy ideal in all men's souls, leading them downward instead of upward. An art which, far from recognizing the angel behind the flower, the essential holiness of each thought of God revealed in Nature, and its own divine possibilities of interpretation, had fallen so low as to regard all these things as lures to sin, as panderers to hell, instead of ladders to heaven. Well was it then, well is it now, to renounce and tread under foot an art

like this! An art which under the false name of Realism sees only the brute, and never the angel: only the foul lust, and never the pure love; only the tempting devil, and never the redeeming God!

Friends have always felt that the artist should be also the disciple, should walk close to the Master in daily life, and should work as though kneeling at the feet of God.

They have felt, too, that the scientist should be like the Neophyte amongst the Rosicrucians and other secret societies, who, having tempered his spirit by self-denial and ardent yearning toward the light, and won by constant strife against base instincts and personal desire, strength, courage, and the faith which is only born of love, dares undergo any ordeal, dares probe and dissect all things, recognizing the while behind them the immanent yet elusive Spirit of God.

We are aware that to some people art appeals not at all, and science is dumb; there is no shame in the confession: it may be that God has closed some of the gates of our nature, but what He has closed He can also open, and if once His Breath has reached us through any avenue of spirit or sense, it is a disgrace if we allow it to be closed again. It shows we are growing materialized, and given up to physical facts; thus losing grasp of one side of our nature, and shutting out the spiritual refreshment, strength, and joy which came through the once open door. . . If at any time music has "led us to the edge of the Infinite," or poetry raised our soul to God, or painting or sculpture revealed the ideal beauty at the heart of life, or science manifested hidden truth, let us hold fast to their revelation; let us treasure their peaceful message. . . Art and Science are both God's angels sent to minister to His children, and lead them home; but by means of the free-will given to these children they can drag these beautiful angels down to the foul dungeons of sensualism, and hold them in the bondage of base uses, or take their hands and be guided to the gate of heaven. . .

They are always, prisoned or free, God's angels, with a deathless power of showing forth the Divinity under all material manifestations.

To some of us the question in Tennyson's much-ridiculed song,

> Science enough and exploring
> But aught that is worth the knowing?

represents very fairly the pith of the matter, but we must remember that God is absolute Truth, and that Science is just as much a revelation of Him on its own particular plane — the intellectual one — as Scripture or immediate Inspiration are on the spiritual plane which they illuminate for our souls.

As will be gathered we think from the preceding paragraphs, Friends have always claimed the whole earth, the entire life for Christ, and have in their truest utterances always protested against that doubting, cowardly spirit, which would withhold members of the Society from taking part, and a leading part wherever possible, in the affairs, social, political, and commercial, of the work-a-day world. There should be no shrinking from duty either as citizens or private individuals. "I pray not," said Jesus, "that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil thereof."

They should strive to set the crooked straight as Members of Parliament, County Councillors, Judges, Magistrates, lawyers, doctors, lecturers, artists, scientists, literary men, in *every* walk of life where it is *possible:* it is also *incumbent* on Friends to lead pure and peaceable existences, and thus preach the gospel to all nations. Preaching the gospel, we must remember, did not mean to Christ and His Apostles, pulpit oratory, or even mission-work, home or foreign; but the commentary of a holy life and conscience, void of offence toward God and man, on the doctrine of love they preached, and a readiness to be tortured, imprisoned, or slain for the truth's sake. And although we are no longer subjected to these extreme

penalties, yet if we *really* preach the gospel in Christ's sense,—a gospel shown quite as clearly in what He *was*, and in what He *did*, as in what He *said*,—we must be prepared for coldness, misunderstanding, possibly loss,—certainly misinterpretation. We must be as ready to sacrifice, if needful, love, fame, success, to our Ideal, as to find them crowning the struggle. We must cheerfully deny ourselves for the sake of others, refraining from what may be to us innocent amusements, or harmless indulgences, from the glass of wine or the concert, the game of cards or the witty repartee, if any of these put stumbling-blocks in our weaker brethren's path to God. We must always remember that *Love* is the fulfilment of the Law, and so remembering, everything in daily life will gradually fall into its natural place and become easy and harmonious.

In the life of love alone is there true freedom for the spirit, because thus it receives its laws from the Father of Spirits Himself, while the Inner Light shows best in the silent communion love reaches, and if truly watched and waited upon, it will enable us to enjoy all the revelations of science, all the glories of art, without fear; for it will disentangle the harmful from the innocent with as much certainty as the ministering ants in Psyche's story disentangled the grains from the husks, leaving no doubt in our minds as to what we should renounce or retain, if only we prayerfully listen.

Our natures, we must remember, are not composed entirely of reason and intellect; there is also heart (emotion, love, faith,) to be considered and satisfied, in quite other ways than by visible or oral proof or logic. When we travel in spiritual regions our spirits need other nourishment than the outside appearance, which is usually called *fact;* though the undoubted *fact* of outward righteousness of life necessarily accompanies any real spiritual revelation, for no one can really *believe* anything without his belief taking tangible form in his conduct.

Professing a creed is not believing in Christ. A person

may belong to a Christian Church all his days, yet no more *know* the Inner Light, which is Christ within, than the atheist. Indeed, if the latter does good deeds, as many atheists do, he witnesses to the hidden Christ against his will, and is of those to whom Jesus referred when He said, "Whoso is not against us is on our part."

Quakerism, on the spiritual side of its message, has always most clearly recognized this, and has preached no narrow Gospel — sought to advance no sectarian church — but remembering that Christ sent His gospel to *all* nations— His simple gospel of Love to God and the neighbour— a gospel quite apart from any rite, ceremony, sacrament, creed, dogma, or priest, has sought to bring *all* nations into the glorious liberty of willing obedience to the law written in their hearts: the law of the development of their highest natures, in obedience to which all barriers of race or rank fall, and all things grow pure and peaceable.

This *inwrought* Law develops from *within*, and the new life is a perfect form, fair and full of symmetrical grace like a flower; it seeks to show the completed circle,— wherein spirit, heart, intellect, and reason, are welded together into that beauty which is also the greatest strength,— never the straight unlovely line of one-sided growth. "The God-begotten instrument of the human soul has more than two or three strings. There are many who in their communion with God never touch half the chords of their soul. Seven or eight parts of their nature are abjured or quiescent. What is the consequence? God never hears them sounding back the grandeur and manifoldness of His Name. He hears only monotones, and day after day the same monotones. Their life with Him is a very poor thing." These words of Dr. Pulsford's deserve constant remembrance, for they contain a mighty and much-neglected truth. They contain also the explanation in great measure of Friends' mode of worship. To the true Friend no worship that takes a definite line,— such as a set liturgy, a set time for extemporary prayer or

preaching, appointed intervals for silence or singing,—is in a true sense worship at all. Worship must be drawn from the whole nature quiescent before Him, by God's hand alone; therefore Friends meet in silence, their spirits watching and listening, until, like Æolian harps wind-smitten, the Breath of God, the Spirit of Christ, touches them, and prayer, and praise, and preaching, and thanks-giving, answer the touch, and flow forth in a stream of music.

The experience so beautifully described by Caroline E. Stephen in "Quaker Strongholds" has been, we believe, the experience of many other earnest souls, to whom the silence of the Friends' Meeting has proved the very gate of Heaven. There the soul draws apart from every material aid, with no frailest ladder of sense to climb or rest upon. . . There it is pure spiritual communion, it is utter surrender of the whole nature to the in-breathing of God, or it is mere weariness, a mere blank wall of vacuity. There is no possibility of a half-hearted participation, as in a *conducted* service, a *performed* worship. But to those who have once been in complete unity with its purely spiritual character, all other services or modes of worship—beautiful, thrilling, gorgeous, as many of them are—seem like veils of darkness hiding the Light of the Father of Spirits; seem like shrouds bound about the figure of the living risen Christ. It was not in the whirlwind of eloquent preaching, or the thunder of sacred song, but in the still, small voice that God made Himself heard. "Not by the comet's rush, but the rose's birth."

And the silence of the Friends' Meeting, which grows so full of revelation—the thoughts which, rising in the mind of one, are so frequently spoken by another—the wonderful realization of the veritable presence of the Light of the World in each yearning spirit, opened wide for His entrance, and thrilling into utterance at His gracious touch—who can describe these things? They must be felt to be realized. Mere words convey such a miserably

imperfect idea of what a real Friends' Meeting can be. Speech or silence are all one, and spiritual communion the only reality; until it is difficult sometimes, in that marvellous blessedness of divine overshadowing, to know, if the voice speaking is indeed the voice of a brother or sister kindled by the Spirit, or the still, small voice of God in the listening soul. The world and the world's interests fade away into the distance and are lost sight of, and Christ Himself breathes over all, His calm atmosphere of divine peace and rest.

Probably the spiritual communion which the true Friend enjoys at his meetings, is the nearest approach known to the renewed life which will be the portion of all in the Kingdom of Christ. A life which will make existence on any lower plane impossible, but which in its universal spiritual circle, will embrace *all* varieties of nature, and race, and opinion, and belief. A life which will *include* all "Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics;" all whom the churches have *excluded*, or Society has ostracized! Yea, and even, in some fashion we cannot yet comprehend, all life below the human, all those despised or tortured creatures, to whom we in our arrogance have denied a soul, and have hunted or dissected under the names of sport or science, ignorant or forgetful that Life proceeds from God, and is a portion of His Spirit wherever found.

There is an old legend that the Christ is still journeying amid the countless stars which gem the heavens, bringing to each world salvation and peace, in the special development of life needed by its constitution; making God manifest according to the diverse natures of the varying stars: and that when His gospel of Love shall have been delivered to the whole universe, His Kingdom will be ready, for all hearts will turn to Him with an overpowering love and worship, and the eternal life will begin at last.

This legend contains a great truth, for it shows the Light of the World in His true character, as the Light and Saviour of all worlds; Who can never cease His Incar-

nation, until the marriage morn, when Creator and created are no more twain, but one perfect whole.

Star after star may kindle and melt in the fervent heat of divine love, until, what we call material substance is transformed into the true spiritual substance. Sun after sun may shine, giving light and life to its surrounding planets, and then breathe itself with fiery breath of devotion into the Eternal Sun; yet while *one* soul remains in bondage, the Saviour is still crucified, the cross is there. But there comes a time when death is swallowed up in life, when cross-bearing is ended, and crown-time strikes: when the human no longer fetters the divine, but the divine sets the prisoned human free. And it is to this innermost essence of Christianity, this freedom from the bondage of sin, quite apart from any fear of punishment or hope of reward, that Quakerism must appeal to-day, as in the first flush of Inspiration, George Fox and his followers appealed more than two centuries ago. It must lay more stress on the *universal* Christ, and far less on the *national* or *sectarian* Christ. More attention must be given to the Light, which is indeed *Christ Himself in us*, but which is also manifested under other names, and shown forth in a different gospel, to other nations and other races, and in times and places whereto His blessed name has never come.

It must insist that the one test of faith shall be *the life that preaches*, and in delivering its message to the coming century it must beware of making a form of formlessness, or pinning its faith to the letter of Scripture, apart from the spirit; of shaking off all outward signs of its profession in order to join in the world's amusements, the world's aims. the world's mode of thought; or, on the other hand, of doggedly adhering to these outward symbols, which have become mere husks, though once holding precious seed.

The dead form of birthright membership must be renounced, and once again Quakers must mean all those "professing Truth," and not merely members of "our

Religious Society!" Can we imagine Christ, and John, and Paul, talking of a Religious Society? How then shall we, to whom the Holy Spirit has been sent, with whom Christ dwells each day, each hour of our renewed life, dare to imprison the Light of the World in the narrow walls of a human society.

Love God and your neighbour, said Jesus. Believe in the Lord Jesus, said Paul and John. And what is our message to-day beyond these two answers given to the Seekers of old?

It is—love God and your neighbour, break down every barrier, destroy every wall, unloose every fetter, that keeps the spirit of man your brother, from union with the Spirit of God your Father. Do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because of an ancient record, or because His name resounds on the lips of men, in all civilized lands, but believe in Him because you have striven with all your might to follow the highest and deepest promptings of your nature after purity and holiness, after a noble life of perfect freedom won from willing obedience to the law written in your heart, and thus you have found that in the wise words of Tolstoi "all those who, with their whole soul, seek for knowledge of the Truth, for communion with the Father, all who yearn for true happiness, involuntarily, and without conscious effort find themselves travelling along the same road that Christ traversed, and instinctively taking their stand behind Him, are soon aware that He is leading the way. All who love God will converge towards and finally meet on this road. . . He is the Son of God, the Mediator between God and man; it is not that we have been told this by someone, and therefore blindly believe it, but we hold it to be true because all those who seek God find His Son before them, and only through the Son do they understand, see, and know God." In following this law inscribed in your deepest being, in seeking God, (and all seek God in one way or another who seek Truth in any form) you will find that you are becoming

more Christ-like; you are treading in His foot-prints, and so *cannot help* your *life* preaching Him, whatever your spoken words or unspoken thoughts may do. But once this is discovered, once Christ is really seen as *He is*—no fetish in whose name devil's deeds are wrought, despite the record of the churches—but the truest ideal of man, and therefore the clearest manifestation of God the world has known:—not only your lives, but your words and thoughts will be filled with His Spirit, and you will recognize that the tremulous hope, the untiring strife of all nations towards the freedom of a hitherto undreamed of brotherhood, together with the wondrous growth in all spiritual and material power and knowledge, are the shadows cast before it by the approaching Kingdom of Christ. And that the golden city He enlightens and glorifies, as the sun enlightens the sky, is built up with human stones, transmuted into gold, (*gold* symbolizes *love*) by the love which made their everyday-earthly lives grow like unto His divine life; until all the wrongs, and sins, and sorrows, all the despair and remorse, all the crooked instincts and murderous impulses which fettered their spirits, have been trodden under foot and vanquished by the Light, which "runneth like a swift and hungry fire amid dry stubble," and the gold of love, the frankincense of worship, and the myrrh of willing sacrifice, are laid at the Saviour's feet, not only by three kings as of old, but by the whole human race.

This is the goal which Quakerism strives to reach: this is the Ideal it sets before us. But it sets it before us in a purely practical fashion. Let each one, it says, seek the Light in all ways open to him or her, and be quite sure—not with the surety of tradition or teaching, but with the surety of personal discovery and experience—that it is found; but once having found it, let them follow its guidance unhesitatingly, caring for nothing save that they are absolutely *true*, even should the Light appear to lead them into the quaking bog of doubt, or unbelief in its

Divine Source, let them go on never faltering, and they will at last awaken in the likeness of Christ, and be satisfied. However dark the shadows, God is hidden amongst them; however long the night, Christ is the day-star and the Sun of Righteousness, Who will presently arise and scatter the darkness.

And if they walk watchfully in the Light they have found, each hour will bring its little duty of deed or word; nothing that helps another, or loosens the material shrouding of our own or another's spirit, is unimportant, and life rightly lived becomes like a precious mosaic, bound and encircled with gold, wherein is pictured in various colours the life of the Saviour.

Nothing is unimportant, *nothing* is trivial from the Quaker point of view; because the Inner Light is either growing stronger with each moment, each action wrought, each word spoken, or waning into darkness, and ceasing to fall athwart the footsteps of Christ across the world, until its gleam is merged in the eternal radiance of Heaven.

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